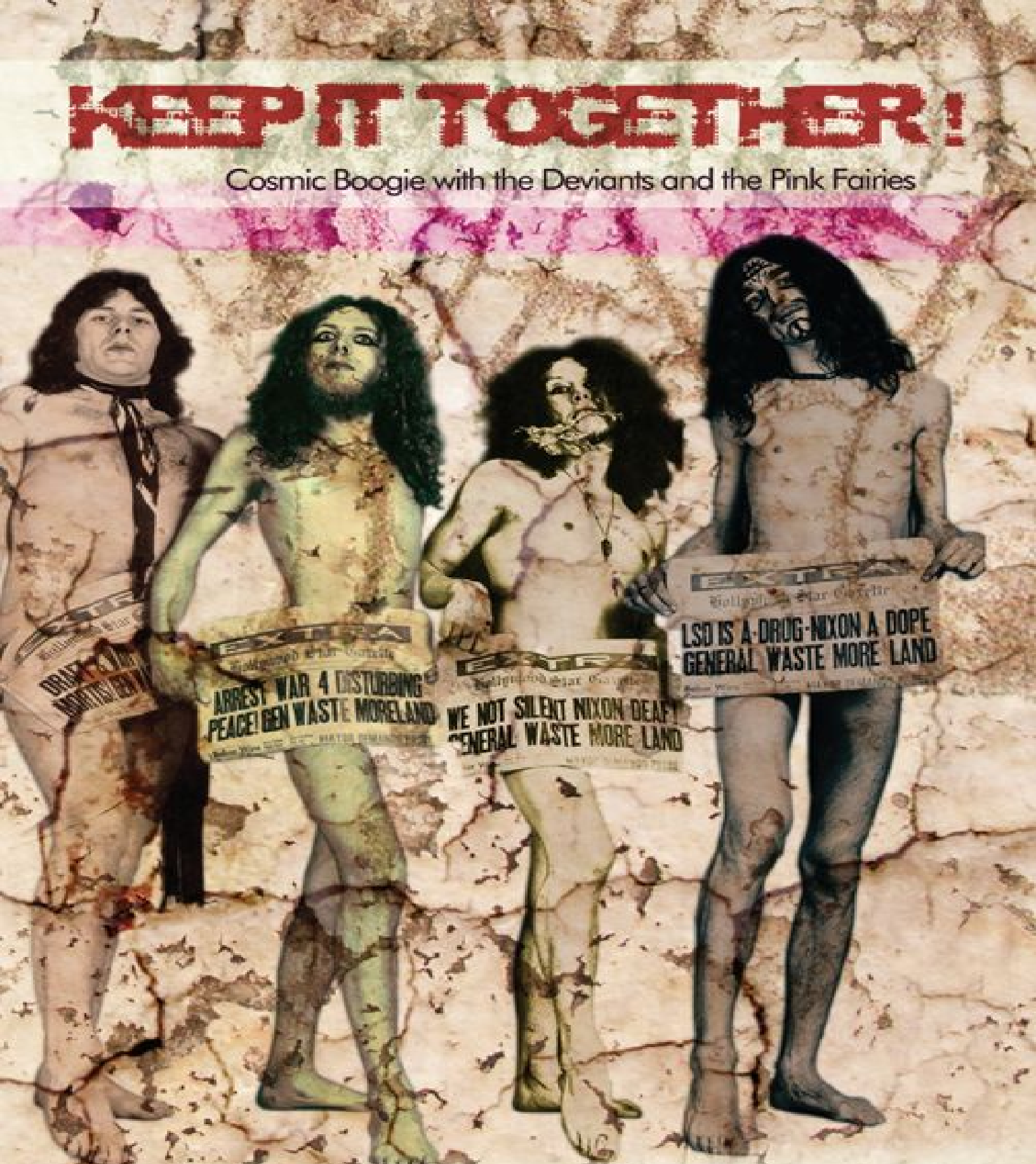
KEEP IT TOGETHER!

Cosmic Boogie with the Deviants and the Pink Fairies


ARREST WAR 4 DISTURBING
PEACE! BEN WASTE MORELAND
WE NOT SILENT NIXON DEAF
GENERAL WASTE MORE LAND
LSD IS A-DRUG-NIXON A DOPE
GENERAL WASTE MORE LAND

RICH DEAKIN

[Introduction by Mick Farren]

KEEP IT TO-GETH-ER!

Cosmic Boogie with the Deviants and the Pink Fairies

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Dedicated to Boss Goodman — truly larger than life — an original.

Also to Cris Elver and all Pink Fairies Freaks everywhere —

Keep it together!

The Ladbroke Groove

Introduction by Mick Farren

I don't know if any of us ever really believed the traditional fantasy. I can almost imagine one or two still do, and feel deprived it never happened for them. The idea was that you acquired a cheap Japanese guitar, graduated to a Fender, then you had a hit, a forty five on the charts with a bullet, and you bought your mum a house, then lived in luxury ever after, drinking Rebel Yell whiskey, and getting laid more than Elvis Presley.

And that was the great dichotomy of rock'n'roll in the time of revolution. Fame, fortune, and the urgent overthrow of Western Civilisation could be a highly contradictory, not to say conflicted, triad of goals, especially when the voice of Farren Mr Natural — Robert Crumb's cartoon • avatar — was also whispering his famous slogan in your sleeping ear. "Quest into the unknown." And Larry Wallis was walking around in a t-shirt that read "Fuck Art, Let's Dance." The times were not only changing, but also becoming damned confusing, frequently surreal, and, on a bad night, when the stains on the barroom floor were legible hieroglyphics, starting to make terrifying sense.

One tried and true recipe for keeping at least a portion of one's sanity was to approach the vagaries of time, place, and the rock'n'roll profession as one mighty, never ending roll of the dice. Every so often, life and the cosmos might cut a boy a break, and the bones would turn up a natural seven-come-eleven, but on others, the devil himself would wink, just as he'd winked at Gene Vincent and poor Johnny Ace, and you'd find yourself looking at a bad dose of snake eyes. Mercifully, though, the instants of good fortune and the moments of dire catastrophe were the exceptions. Most of one's time was spent trying to roll a four the hard way. Often, it seemed, uphill, and with the tip of one's nose.

The story that you are about to read is neither one of triumph nor tragedy. Some of us who have survived would not even admit that the tale is entirely complete. Maybe the bulk of the drama has been played out, but there is always room for one more round while the boys can hold their cards, and engage in one final and maybe defining scene before we fold and take the ultimate bow. The narrative is one that talks of both inspiration and desperation — and players in the drama soaked in perspiration—the stage sweat that's a given. At best this story is the saga of a travelling show, a constantly mutating carnival of souls and sinners, clowns and con artists, jesters and jugglers, pirates and posers, floozies and fabulists, methedrine musketeers and orphan Ophelias, on a journey both haphazard and hazardous, with Russell Hunter and Duncan Sanderson maintaining the thunder through times as 'interesting' as any Chinese curse.

The heydays of the Deviants and then the Pink Fairies left blurred impressions of constant, if punctuated motion, and an entire world viewed from the chronic distortion of three chords and a four-piece band — with the great Boss Goodman leading the mission from God — and musicians plying their trade while still learning it. Was this Leeds or Liverpool, Penzance or Paris, Amsterdam or Aberdeen? What time was it, what day was it? Was that the rising sun before us, or the fire of the apocalypse? And what route do we take from Portobello Road to Haight Street? Someone roll a joint, pass the bottle, count the pills, and we'll give our best guess. No idea of the destination but we're going anyway. A line from Bob Dylan described it all to perfection. (But isn't there always a line from Bob Dylan that describes it all to perfection?) "There was music in the cafes at night

and revolution on the stairs." In a more direct lyric Larry Wallis called it "sleeping single, drinking double."

And all that time weren't any of us dreaming of material fortune or wondering about conventional fame? I'd be lying if I said we weren't. If Reg Presley and The Troggs could make hit records, surely anyone could. Our only mistake was that we neglected to write Wild Thing. I doubt, though, there was a man among us who didn't wonder, at least one time, how it might feel to be Elvis or Jim Morrison; the ultimate irony being that both those blazing luminaries found themselves dead and buried long before our saga was complete.

The Deviants were hardly designed for pop star potential, more a gadfly, street trash nuisance: at best, rabble rousing rebels in their private delusions of grandeur; at worst, sorry-ass, lost-urchin pilgrims on the road to perdition who had forgotten their maps, and also their sandwiches. In a boastfully defiant line I called us: *"One part outrageous, nine parts contagious."* The Pink Fairies, on the other hand, had their moments with managers and major labels, and, here and there, it was almost plausible. The Portobello Shuffle might be, in metaphor at least, a dance sensation sweeping the nation. But defeat was snatched so routinely from the jaws of Victory that Victory became bored and looked elsewhere, and suddenly it was Hawkwind in the charts with Silver Machine, and Motorhead had a hit with Louie Louie. Who would have thought it?

Pointless, though, to complain about what might have been. To paraphrase Popeye the Sailor, we were what we were, and still we are what we are. We have stood on the same stages as legends, and faced crowds that stretched all the way to the horizon, and on those good and epic nights, we worked the magic and all we could hear were the cheers, and we knew they were genuine, heartfelt, and we had earned them for real. Like I said, the story you are about to read is neither one of triumph nor tragedy. If it's about anything, it's the grim appreciation that one is keeping it real even when reality is at its most elusive. Which, deep down, where the spirit survives, is what the hardest core of rock'n'roll is all about.

Prøløgue
"Brrring brrring brrring brrring
'Hello there, hello there. Pink Fairies on earth I have a call from Uranus for you.'
'Yes, erm good. Better put them through'…
'This is Uranus calling Pink Fairies, this is Uranus…I say is there someone from the Pink Fairies there…I want the Pink Fairies for a gig on Uranus… I'll pay fifteen hundred thousand intergalactic credits for a gig on Uranus!'"

So began Prologue on the Pink Fairies 1972 album *What a Bunch of Sweeties.* Displaying the kind of dope induced humour befitting a band with the Pink Fairies' reputation for chemical excess, the short fiction dialogue concerned a promoter wanting to book the band to play on another planet. With regards to promoters, the Pink Fairies were certainly ripped off by, and heard plenty of unlikely excuses from, promoters throughout their existence. But along the way, they also established themselves as one of the leading underground "community" bands. With the likes of Hawkwind and the Edgar Broughton Band, the Pink Fairies were a ubiquitous sight at free festivals and community benefits throughout the early 1970s. As for the gig on Uranus, the Pink Fairies never did make it, although it must have sometimes seemed like they did, what with the varying states of chemical disrepair they and their audiences could often be found in. For example, on the weekend of August 24-27, 1970, for the residents of Patching, near Ecclesden Common, it may well have been Uranus. At the very least, it must have seemed as if an alien invasion had taken place. The reason for this was the Phun City Festival — a rock festival ostensibly organised to

raise funds for the underground newspaper *International Times (IT).* Whether by design or not, it is now regarded to be one of the first "free festivals" to be held in Britain. The person responsible for organising the intrusion into the normally bucolic lives of the residents of Patching was Mick Farren, founder member of the Deviants, and prototype Pink Fairies.

At the climax of the Pink Fairies set at Phun City, the band's two drummers stripped naked and cavorted and embraced one another on stage, a suitably outrageous end to a typically anarchic set. As if that wasn't enough, the legendary American counterculture revolutionaries MC5 were also due to make their debut on British soil later that evening. Surveying the proceedings from the side of the stage, Mick Farren, having had little or no sleep at all in the previous few days, stood back and took time to reflect on the obstacles he had overcome in the past few weeks: court injunctions, emergency meetings with local police and councillors, financial backers pulling out and hostility from local residents. Was it all worth it? To see several thousand freaks and hippies getting it on and doing their own thing, right on the doorstep of the village he had grown up in as a child and teenager, Mick thought it was all worth it: he had finally returned to wreak vengeance on the boring old backwater near to Worthing, on the south coast of England. In his autobiography, *Give the Anarchist A Cigarette,* Mick said: "I would be confirming the worst expectations of the yokels who had once mocked me, the junior beatnik, wandering lonely as a cloud. Nothing like a few thousand hippies to put Dan Archer in his miserable Thomas Hardy place."

But, before that — some twenty seven years earlier — Mick Farren had to attend to the small matter of being born, and somewhere along the way forming a band called the Social Deviants who would eventually mutate into the Pink Fairies.

part one

The Dream is Just Beginning

Michael Anthony Farren, founder member of the Social Deviants and the Pink Fairies All Star Rock'n'Roll Motorcycle Club was born on September 3, 1943, in Cheltenham, a sleepy Spa town in the Cotswolds with a reputation for being the preserve of retired colonels. Soon after the birth, Mick's mother, Gwen, joined the army and he went to live in a village called Charlton Kings, about one and a half miles to the east of Cheltenham. He stayed with his Grandma in a Victorian terraced street called Copt Elm Road that leads from the church in the centre of Charlton Kings to the main A40 road that runs out of Cheltenham to London. Twenty years later Mick Farren would wend his way to London by a less direct route.

Mick's earliest years are those spent in the relative safety of the Cotswold countryside away from the carnage being wreaked on Britain's major cities and industrial areas by the Luftwaffe. Mick's father was a navigator in the Royal Air Force carrying out bombing raids over Germany. However, Mick would never remember seeing him. Eric Farren was killed in a Wellington bomber on the diversionary raid on Cologne, as part of the firebombing of Dresden, just as the war was turning in favour of the Allies.

Mick would remain in Cheltenham until his mother left the army and married his stepfather soon after the war had ended. They moved to the south of England a few years later. Although Mick periodically returned to Cheltenham to stay with his Grandma during school holidays, the majority of his early years were spent in the English south coast seaside town of Worthing where he attended West Tarring Mixed Infants School, Vale Primary School and Worthing High School for boys. Neither Cheltenham nor Worthing were the most swinging of places to be growing up in the 1950s, and Mick was not sorry to leave his local art college in the early 1960s to study at the prestigious St Martin's College of Art in West London. However, Mick had not quite finished with Worthing, and his infamous return there in 1970 has gone down in the annals of British counterculture history.

Even by 1956, long after the war had ended, Britain was still in grip of the privations brought about by the conflict. As a breath of fresh air in the grey sterility of post war austerity, rationing and continued conscription, a new kind of music arrived in Great Britain from America. Rock'n'roll completely captured Farren's imagination, along with countless others of his generation. The likes of Elvis Presley, Gene Vincent and Eddie Cochran seemed dangerous and exuded menace and anger and only served to widen an ever increasing generation gap between teenagers and their parents. Mick was no exception, a point touched upon in Farren's book *Watch Out Kids:*

> *When I first brought home any records (Elvis's All Shook Up and Lonnie Donegan's Rock Island Line) my parents reacted with some kind of instinctive dislike to the whole deal. My friends and I found ourselves in* a *running fight as to how tight we could peg our pants. We saved our newspaper round pay to buy our own record players so we could carry music into our own rooms, away from the central family living room, where playing rock'n'roll records was firstly restricted and secondly* a cause *of family fights.*

Regardless of what the kids were rebelling against, rock'n'roll helped to define the battle lines. The generation gap had never looked so wide. Of his stepfather, Farren says: "He hated [rock'n'roll], and used every excuse to

separate me from the music. Any misdemeanor was punished by the record player being impounded for a set period. The line became defined more closely."

Mick claims in his autobiography that he was always angry, and can't remember a time when he wasn't. "The mother-lode of rage . . . seemed to have firmly lodged itself in rock'n'roll," he said. Rock'n'roll provided an outlet through which the likes of Farren could express their anger. When the Bill Haley film *Rock Around The Clock* was screened throughout the nation's cinemas in 1956, not only did Teddy Boys and Girls leave their seats to start jiving in the aisles, they ripped them out and slashed them with their flick knives.

Rock'n'roll provided a catalyst that sparked an explosion of garage bands. All across Britain, as it had in America, disaffected youth took up arms against their parents in the form of mics, guitars and drums. Britain also had washboards and developed its own variation on rock'n'roll in the form of skiffle, with Lonnie Donegan being one of Farren's favourites. Over the next few years, instrumental bands such as The Shadows with their twangy guitar sound, matching suits and rehearsed stage moves became enormously popular in Britain and numerous imitators formed their own "beat combos." Ian Bishop, better known as Sid Bishop and future guitarist of the Deviants, was one such teenager.

Sid Bishop was born Ian Bishop in the Weir Road Maternity Hospital in Balham in South London on December 17, 1946. Much of his youth was spent living in and around Streatham and Brixton. Sid to some extent avoided the parental conflict endured by Mick Farren: Sid's father had a more relaxed attitude towards music, having himself been a guitarist in jazz and swing bands, before and during the war. By the time he reached Tulse Hill Secondary School, when he was nearly fourteen, Sid had found his father's old cello style jazz guitar under the bed (where it been idle since the war) and started to play. Although his father did little to encourage him to play, he did not discourage him either. "As kids do, I started twanging away, probably driving [my father] mad," says Sid, adding:

> *Somewhat reluctantly, he nonetheless showed me a couple of chords, and gave me some basic tips, and then left me to it . . . As*

far as the guitar playing was concerned, I really wanted a solid body electric so I could play like Hank Marvin, the Acme of guitar players at the time. Eventually I'd saved enough to go up to Selmer's in Charing Cross Road and buy a *Hofner Colorama, bright red of course with a small amp. Diligently, and listening to Hank all the time, I practiced until myself and a couple of friends at school decided we were good enough to form a band, one guy playing drums, and another bass guitar. Actually, in a primitive sort of way, I suppose we weren't too bad. We played during the intervals at school plays, and on open days and the like. We were just into the early sixties by now, so it was all instrumentals and surfing music.*

Prior to joining what might be described as his first proper band at West Sussex College of Art, Mick Farren's own earliest foray into the world of music was also around the age of fourteen. It was not particularly serious and never really got beyond him and a few mates getting together with their battered, but nevertheless hard earned, junk shop Spanish guitars and learning the chords to Be Bop-A-Lula. The names of these friends have long since faded from Farren's memory, but he recalls how one had a brother who was in America and would occasionally send him new R&B singles and turn them on to artists such as Screamin' Jay Hawkins and Howlin' Wolf. It was Gene Vincent who really captured the teenage Farren's imagination, resulting in a reverence of the man that exists for Farren to this day. In his biography, *Gene Vincent: There's One In Every Town,* Mick recalls a Gene Vincent performance at Brighton Essoldo in 1961 and the estimation in which he held the rock'n'roller's image: "For the night Gene was to be the eye of our hurricane and in some respects, for the time and the demographic, Gene Vincent was actually more important than Elvis Presley. . . . He was obtainable. His magic was within reach, and his role as rock'n'roll magician was one to which we might just aspire." The potency of Vincent's prototype black leather clad rocker image would not be lost on generations of rock'n'rollers to come, from the likes of Jim Morrison through the Ramones and Sid Vicious to Marilyn Manson. Farren was not averse to taking a leaf or two of his own from the Gene Vincent book of sartorial elegance. "At various times I borrowed from Gene

Vincent, Miles Davis, Fidel Castro, Doc Holliday, Johnny Cash, or any combination of the five." Mick says: "Such was the effect of Gene, all those years ago. I firmly believed that rock'n'roll harboured a solid, if unshaped core of insurrection."

The foundations of Mick's rock'n'roll insurrection had been well and truly laid and he set about becoming a rock'n'roll singer in his own right. In his early days at West Sussex College of Art, Farren recalls how he had been in a band "that was variously called the Mafia — the name contained my initials — or the Corvettes. The former was post Gene Vincent garage rock, the latter a Shadows knock off."

Mick initially played bass, but by his own admission had no aptitude for the instrument and much preferred the idea of becoming the singer and front man. The inevitable clashes with other band members ensued. In this case:

> *The guitarist, who resembled* a *short-sighted and tubby Brian Jones. His dream was an instrumental band wearing matching grey mohair suits and ruffle shirts, playing Shadows and Ventures tunes, in which he was the front man. I, on the other hand, envisioned an outlaw ensemble drawing on the Eddie Cochran, Buddy Holly and Gene Vincent catalogues, and I'd be clinging to* a *mic stand in* a *biker jacket and one black glove.*

A power struggle ensued in which the rich kid guitarist used his influence over the rest of the band by getting his mother to promise to buy all of the band matching grey suits when they first got a proper paying gig. Farren recalls that: "This actually came to pass, at the Rex Ballroom in Bognor Regis, but only after I was well out of the band." And anyway, "[They] started gigging about six months too late, because garage bands were taking over." It would be a number of years before Mick would be involved with another band again, although he would make a less than successful attempt to master the blues/folk acoustic guitar at his next art school.

Mick's musical tastes were not too dissimilar to those of Sid Bishop, and by 1963, when Beatlemania was breaking, Sid and his best friend Dave Kelly — later of Blues Band fame — eschewed the Beatles in favour of the

Rolling Stones and bought LPs by the likes of Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. However, unless you knew someone who had connections in the States, getting hold of blues rarities could be hard. Dobell's Blues and Jazz Shop, just off the Charing Cross Road, was a good hunting ground for rare imports, and Sid became hooked on the blues, especially after hearing the likes of Otis Rush and Buddy Guy. He decided that this was the path for him.

Still in the band, and still at school with seven 'O' Levels under his belt, Sid was in the middle of studying for his 'A' Levels and planning to become an Oil Exploration Geologist when, "I chucked it all in, and dropped out to become a professional musician." Talk about a radical career change! "I was bored with school and all its seemingly pointless disciplines, and wanted to join a rock'n'roll band."

In time honoured fashion, Sid answered a *Melody Maker* ad in 1965. With his ever increasing list of blues influences, now including Hubert Sumlin and John Lee Hooker, and just about any other black blues guitarist for that matter, the ad resulted in Sid joining a group called the Southside Blues Band. "We started doing some good, fairly high profile gigs around London and the south east, and making money!" says Sid, "I loved playing blues — and still do. As an instrumentalist it gave me a lot of room to stretch and make the most of what, in truth, were my limited talents at the time. We seemed to always go down well and were fairly highly regarded, so I must have been doing something right."

Sid's first experience of a recording studio came with a demo he made with the Southside Blues Band. The song in question was a version of Wilbert Harrison's Let's Work Together, covered later by Canned Heat, and probably better known as Let's Stick Together by Bryan Ferry.

Further west from Worthing, along the south coast of England near the seaside town of Poole, another future Deviant and Pink Fairy was growing up. Barry Russell Hunter was born on April 26, 1946, in Woking, Surrey. The family home was actually in Waterloo, central South East London, but Waterloo mainline railway station was a prime Nazi target, and so the maternity department of the local hospital was situated in suburban Surrey, where it had been evacuated for the duration of WWII. Some two and a half years after Russell was born, the family relocated to Upton, where the

British Drug Houses (BDH), a chemical company for which Russell's father worked, had built houses for their factory in nearby Poole.

Hunter spent a conventionally happy childhood in Dorset, where he was educated at Upton Infants School between the ages of five and seven, and then at Minster Lytchett Primary School, a quaint but ramshackle collection of stone buildings and pre-fabricated sheds, situated next to an equally dilapidated church: the eponymous village Minster. The most exciting thing that Russell remembers from this time was the sight of an old (even then!) biplane lurching in smoke across the playground and crashing into the back field. It was at around this time that Russell came to be known as Russell. "By the time I was eighteen," Russell recalls, "even my parents had forgotten, or pretended to have, that they had christened me 'Barry'."

Russell too had been struck by the allure of rock'n'roll. This was due to Robert Fripp, later of prog rock behemoths King Crimson and now thoroughly respected as an eminent jazz guitarist. He says:

> *I went to school with Bob Fripp. At Wimborne Grammar School, where we were seated alphabetically, it went Bob Fripp, Gordon Haskell, Russell Hunter in* a *line, one behind the other. Bob is actually the main inspiration behind me taking up the drums. When we were all about fifteen or sixteen, Bob and Gordon were part of one of the better, if not the best, local bands, the League of Gentlemen. I used to go watch them at the Cellar Club in Poole, and they had* a *Friday night residency in* a *funky little hotel in Bournemouth. I was just entranced. It had not previously dawned on me that ordinary people could do this stuff, and even eventually do it as 'work'! I quickly realised that the guitar was going to be beyond me. I have — especially at that age — very small hands, couldn't do the chord shapes, so the piano was also a non starter. Drums were the obvious way.*

Taking his cue from the League of Gentlemen and other emerging local bands from the Bournemouth and Poole area, the budding young drummer set about getting a kit on which to practice. He learnt to play listening to contemporary drummers, such as Tony Meehan of the Shadows and DJ

Fontana of Elvis fame, and also Motown and other early sixties trad and pop bands. It wouldn't be long before Russell joined the first of a series of bands based in the Dorset area. His first appearance on stage was with a cabaret act called the Dictators and he lasted just one gig. His next tenure was with the Big Six Beat Combo, which lasted a little longer, until he was recommended to John Dickenson who wanted to start a band called the Hurricanes. Their main influences would be John Lee Hooker, Howlin' Wolf, Jimmy Reed and the emerging Bob Dylan. In addition to these influences, Russell says:

> *We did Motown, Chuck Berry, and some of the current hits, Searchers, Stones, Beatles etc. And we tried our hand at our own stuff. We did all right, changed the name quite quickly to the Mob, and became the band that promoters came to when they wanted an opening act for the 'Big Boys' visits. We opened for the Animals, the Yardbirds, the Searchers, the Big Three, Jimmy Reed (and served as his backing band) and some lesser lights. And we toured the circuit of small working men's clubs in the north east — Teenage Beat Nights — and all round enjoyed ourselves hugely.*

It was with the Mob that Russell got his first taste of a recording studio, albeit the unconventional recording studio owned by legendary producer Joe Meek, who also produced the record. Russell remembers it like this:

> *We had an agent for a while, of the old school, theatrical impresario type, Jean Alexander, who somehow or other knew Joe. So off we went to [Joe Meek's] little flat in Holloway Road; the first time any of us had ever been in any kind of studio. And it was just like popular legend. His front room was where the drums and amps went, vocals were in the bathroom, and it was all very friendly. I've heard descriptions of Joe that make him out to have been some kind of leering Svengali looking for any kind of opportunity to fondle pretty young* boys, *but we found him totally professional. He took* a *lot of time and trouble with our very average songs and ability, and never said or did anything remotely out of line;* a very *nice guy, who must have had* a *difficult time with*

the prejudices of the time. The songs we did were called Gypsy and Don't Make A Habit Of This. I think about six copies were pressed on some label that died years ago.

Russell left the band soon after the session with Joe Meek and went to work for the Post Office at Bournemouth for three months. "That's when I got heavily into purple hearts, double blues, things like that," Russell recalls. "All the beatniks used to come to Bournemouth in the summer. We hung around with them, tried smoking dope — the big new experience. It was about the same time that Donovan was making headlines in London for taking LSD and all the worries about drugs were starting to break out."

Following Russell's departure from the Mob, a young Greg Lake would join the band as bassist and the Mob would change their name to the Shame and cut a single, before Lake went onto bigger things with King Crimson and of course Emerson, Lake & Palmer. "What I was interested in was not so much rock'n'roll, as 'the scene'," says Russell. "Mostly I wanted to get to London, to where the action was." Russell did this by passing his civil service exam and getting himself posted to Her Majesty's Stationery Office in London, Farringdon House in Holborn. Arriving in 1965, Russell found himself a civil service hostel and, in an unused interview for *Days In The Life,* told Jonathon Green in 1987: "[I] went to work like a good boy for about four months. I found a friendly doctor who used to give me these great big purple pills called Barbidex; like blues, only twice as strong, with a hefty dose of barbiturate to calm you down at the end."

It didn't take long for Russell to find his way around the capital's hip and happening scenes, gravitating towards clubs like Tiles, Whiskey-A-Go-Go, and the Flamingo, where Geno Washington and other soul music was played. The Flamingo was particularly notorious as a pill den, probably a hangover from its reputation during the mod heyday.

It was reasonably easy to get pills in many clubs. Russell mentions one seedy club that used to be accessed through a car park round the back of Piccadilly: "If you wanted to go in the club you gave them five shillings and if you wanted drugs you gave them a ten shilling note," he says. "It was well accepted that if you gave them a ten shilling note then they'd give you four blues and you didn't go into the club. It was a desolate, bomb site car

park and there were the remains of an old building, the cellar of which had been propped up and turned into a club."

But the club scene was changing, and the mod scene was fast fading with the emergence of psychedelia. By the autumn of 1966 Russell discovered a club called UFO, situated in the basement of an Irish dance hall in the Tottenham Court Road called the Blarney Club. It was here that Russell would meet up with Mick Farren and become, in 1967, a Social Deviant.

A pre-Deviants Russell Hunter with a statue of an unknown namesake (Photograph courtesy of Jenny Ashworth)

part two

From Notting Hill to Deviation

After leaving the Mafia, Mick decided to change college. In the summer of 1963 Mick's application to the prestigious St Martin's Art School in London was accepted and he left West Sussex Art College to start there in September of that year. Mick states in his autobiography that he wasn't involved with any bands at St Martins; his musical activities never really

extended beyond “a lot of earnest folk blues jamming,” usually performing Woody Guthrie numbers or Communist Party songs like The Man Who Watered The Workers’ Beer. Also involved in these jams on harmonica was one Alex Stowell, another name to be associated with the Social Deviants.

Throughout his time at art school, Mick said he continued “to pay lip service to a conventional ambition. It kept the grown ups quiet . . . [but] with each succeeding year, it had become harder to remain convinced.”

By the time Mick Farren had finished his stint at college the half hearted aspirations to become a Sunday supplement graphic designer were well and truly out the window. By the winter of 1964, Mick was living in a somewhat squalid, rented bedsit at 36 Clifton Gardens, Notting Hill. He was unable to claim dole as he had not previously held a legitimate job. Neither was it practical to go on the “nab” (an acronym for National Assistance Board) as stringent checks were likely to catch Mick out as he drifted through a succession of casual jobs to pay the rent. These jobs included selling clockwork toys on Oxford Street and Regent Street, short-order cooking in the catering department of London Zoo, and factory work. Mick considered factory work an enemy of the human psyche and resolved never to do it again. He states in his autobiography that he “saw no innate virtue, and certainly no vestige of dignity, in mind numbing labour.”

Around this time, Farren got to know a couple of young musicians through the pubs he frequented around Ladbroke Grove. Pete Munro was a young Canadian travelling around Europe on post educational studies, and Ralph Hodgson was a Geordie who played keyboards. Pete’s instrument of choice was a large stand-up bass; “a less than mobile instrument,” according to Mick, that “had rather anchored [Pete] in the ghettos of West London.” It was only a matter of time before the three budding musicians convened to practice in Ralph’s bedsit in nearby Chepstow Road.

Ralph inherited some of his piano skills from his grandmother, prior to moving to London, and was influenced by early piano blues musicians and Georgie Fame. But it was his mentor Bernie Watson in Sunderland that influenced Ralph the most, and from whom he learned many of his improvisational piano skills.

By 1964 Ralph and a friend from Sunderland, Ernie Rutter, had been accepted onto two of only seven coveted places to study for a degree in Geology at the Royal School of Mines, Imperial College. “I was always an outdoor type and I thought that getting a degree in Geology would enable me to become a professional caver,” says Ralph, adding that “this was 1964 and with caving, climbing and music there were too many distractions. I only did one year. In 1965 I was in Ladbroke Grove sharing a place with a bass player called Pete Munro. Soon we were to meet Mick Farren.”

It was now the mid sixties and Bob Dylan’s influence on the music world was not inconsiderable. Mick wanted to say something with his own latest musical combo, but what that was and how to describe it was not easy. They had also recently discovered Greenwich Village beatnik proto hippy band the Fugs, which comprised Ed Sanders, Tuli Kupferberg and Ken Weaver. Influenced by the Beat writers Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, the Fugs were just as likely to incorporate poetry into their performance as they were to make an unholy musical racket. Farren says: “They were loud, tuneless and noisy” — credentials that would later be attributed to the Social Deviants. In addition to making the pornographic lyric a valid part of rock reference, the Fugs added a touch of the theatrical to their performance, which involved the flinging of spaghetti, the mutilation of Barbie dolls, and the stripping of young females who had been dragged up on stage. The contribution made by the Fugs to rock’n’roll would appear fairly minimal, but Farren cites them as an influence in the development of his own band, and in an *NME* retrospective from August 1974, their place in the greater scheme of popular music: “Their place in the hall of fame is guaranteed by the ground they broke, and the prejudices they overturned. Without the precedents they established, the difficulties for bands like the Mothers, Stooges, the MC5 and Alice Cooper, who followed a similar path in their early stages, would have been greatly increased.”

Occasionally calling themselves Cat Row Foundation, and fuelled by a passion for Bob Dylan and a love of fifties rock’n’roll, Farren’s musical combo set about the task of rehearsals with great gusto. A fair approximation of their efforts, by Mick’s own admission, might be described as “raucous and horrible.” This didn’t deter the band from inflicting themselves upon an unsuspecting audience, largely consisting of

Irish navvies in a pub called the Artesian Well, on the corner of Talbot Road and Chepstow Road, handily situated near to both Mick's home and Ralph and Pete's in the Notting Hill area of London.

To some extent, this was still the Notting Hill of Colin MacInnes' *Absolute Beginners.* The area had character and a reputation, and the fallout from the 1958 race riots had not entirely settled by the mid sixties. It was still a place proliferated by largely decaying housing, hastily converted into multiple occupation tenancies to exploit the influx of West Indian immigrants. Many of the houses were bordering on slum tenancies, for which rent collecting had been overseen for years by the infamous slum landlord Peter Rachman, allegedly aided and abetted by his notorious henchman Michael de Freitas, who was later known as black power activist Michael X.

Beat writers such as Alex Trocchi and Michael Horovitz, and the existentialist Colin Wilson moved in and began to exert an influence on Notting Hill. The increasing bohemian activity of these new arrivals in the early sixties, combined with the new cultures and customs of the immigration population, provided the district with a distinctive and colourful vibe. For a young impressionable Mick Farren, Notting Hill opened up fresh avenues of exploration, despite the grotty accommodation he now found himself in. Mick had dabbled with pills at art school, but living in Notting Hill provided an entrance into the twilight world of pot — marijuana and hashish.

Despite being a multi-cultural melting pot, Notting Hill was still defined by racial boundaries to a degree. The Caribbean/West Indian enclave was roughly bounded by Westbourne Grove to the south, Ladbroke Grove to the west, Lancaster Road/Tavistock Crescent to the north, and Great Western Road/Chepstow Road to the east. Mick says that if you wanted to score dope you'd see a white person for hashish and a black person for weed. Living in the predominantly black area around Ladbroke Grove, Mick nearly always fell into the latter category. This had its downside: although it was fairly acceptable for a West Indian to interact within the white hipster community, a white person might be treated with considerably more hostility if they ventured forth to somewhere like All Saints Road or

Lancaster Road to cop a deal, or to visit a blues club, an illegal drinking club or a shebeen.

Mick was exposed to new influences in Notting Hill. Already well versed in his beloved Beat writers, he soon became acquainted with Alex Trocchi, who was not only one of Britain's foremost exponents of Beat poetry and writing, but also co-owner of a record shop with Michael de Freitas. The music that this shop endorsed would have a profound effect on Farren. It specialised in avant-garde jazz by the likes of the Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Charlie Mingus and Miles Davis, and was situated off the Westbourne Park Road, right in the midst of Notting Dale. This was a location not far from where the various band members lived, and close to the Artesian Well public house, where Cat Row Foundation's earliest musical forays took place.

These performances at the Artesian Well might arguably be likened to music terrorism, or even "guerrilla gigs" (a term beloved and bandied around by the *NME* these days as though the concept is a new one). Cat Row Foundation exploited the "amateur talent" spot of many an evening in the Artesian Well, which was an opportunity for the regular pub entertainer, an individual named "Mr Showbusiness" by Mick, to take a breather and ridicule the inevitable drunk that got up to slur through a Jim Reeves song. The band would infiltrate the amateur talent spot undercover of a seemingly innocent solo piano effort by Ralph, who endeared himself to the predominantly drunk and Irish audience by tinkling his way through various pub standards, before the rest of the band systematically joined him and they introduced songs of their own choice from the canons of Buddy Holly and Jerry Lee Lewis. Lest their impromptu renditions of rock'n'roll classics should turn the audience against them, the band sidestepped into a number of Irish rebel songs, which caused the audience to enthusiastically bellow along with them. This was also enough to dissuade the landlord from calling a halt to the proceedings and risk upsetting the Irishmen in full patriotic swing.

These “guerrilla performances” continued for a number of weeks. But as initial caution gave way to out and out confidence, the landlord finally voiced his objection following a particularly disturbing version of Bob Dylan’s The Ballad Of Hollis Brown, performed by Mick in what has since come to be known as his “hallmark monotone.” According to Mick the

audience were too stunned to either applaud or boo and were simply struck dumb after this performance. Relations with the landlord were strained to the point of no return, and Ralph had endured about as much as he could take of the relatively ramshackle Cat Row Foundation. Soon after this the band — minus Ralph — moved to East London at the behest of Mick's old art school pal and future Social Deviants luminary, Alex Stowell.

Alex was born in May 1943 at an evacuation hospital in the Midlands of England. After leaving school he attended John Cass School of Art and St Martin's School of Art in London, where he met Mick. Alex was never particularly musical, owned few records and attended few concerts, but of his childhood he says:

> *We would rummage through stacks of 78s for ones marked 'foxtrot,' this being the fastest thing around. I remember hearing Spanish guitar played on the radio and being amazed. Then we had those crooners, like you know the one who was deaf in one ear, was it Johnny Ray? Then Tommy Steel, Bill Haley etc. I spent* a *couple of* years *working in Ronnie Scott's Old Place soaking up some pretty heavy modern jazz. Then Trad Jazz was the thing at early art school. Then 'the bomb' — Cuba — we could all be killed instantly out of* a *blue sky, maybe with four minutes warning, then the Beatles, Dylan . . . the rest is history. To my mind, speaking of Cuba, that was the scariest time ever. I believe it concentrated a great many minds. I liked Shaky Jake and Mingus.*

Indeed, the Cold War and the threat of the bomb was a shadow that loomed ever present over life in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Mick Farren recalls the attitude of the times in *Anarchist:* "A few years earlier [the bomb] had been all that anyone talked about. After the Cuban Missile Crisis the kids I hung around with had fallen ominously silent. We had looked into the face of the beast and didn't want to look there again." Never one to miss the opportunity to get in a popular cultural reference, he goes on to say: "I had learned how to stop worrying and love the bomb."

As Bob Dylan was an influence on Farren, poets like Allen Ginsberg were an influence on the early countercultural musicians, like Dylan. The

work of the American Beat poets and novelists did not go unnoticed by the prominent figures emerging from the fusion of anti-bomb protest and Beat culture in Britain. For the first time, notes Farren, “music, youth’s major medium of communication, had the ability to carry information of a direct political, or philosophical nature.” The climate of fear proved to be crucial in the development of the nascent underground scene. Although his CND badge and other accoutrements of his ban-the-bomb phase may have been discarded, the teenage Farren was still, by his own admission, a beatnik. He was well read in Ginsberg, Kerouac and Burroughs, and would himself align with the burgeoning underground movement over the coming months. In the meantime, however, he was concentrating his efforts into the band, which was looking to spread its wings.

As Mick and Pete moved eastward, Sid’s tenure with the Southside Blues Band was coming to an end. “If my memory serves,” says Sid, “the band had broken up shortly before 1967, having run out of steam. I think we all felt we had gone as far as we could go with it.” Ironically, by the mid sixties, the British blues explosion was beginning to make its mark, and had spawned the likes of Jimmy Page, Eric Clapton and John Mayall. Sid, blues purist that he was, confides: “I was not then a great [Eric Clapton] fan, and never bought a John Mayall record. Maybe it’s because he wasn’t black. It just didn’t seem right somehow.” Jeff Beck held greater sway with him; Sid regards Beck to this day as the finest guitar player that Britain has ever produced.

Sid had been playing the guitar for five years and felt the time was right to move on. Having reached a level of competence, and having discovered a new kind of music, predominantly from California, Sid was encouraged to seek a gig in a pro band. “I heard the first Grateful Dead album and it just absolutely blew me away,” Sid recalls. “It also led me into a lifelong love of sixties West Coast, and I listened enraptured to Jefferson Airplane, Pacific Gas and Electric, Frank Zappa, Beefheart, Moby Grape, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Janis Joplin, plus of course the Dead, and probably most of all Blue Cheer.”

By no means setting the rock’n’roll world on fire, the Artesian Well performances did however demonstrate to Mick, Pete and Ralph that they had a certain something, even if only curiosity value. The increasing

numbers of freaks and beatniks turning up each week bore testimony to this. Heartened by this reaction, the band decided to take things further, and as Mick now says in *Give The Anarchist A Cigarette:* "We lacked expertise, a guitar player and any coherent definition beyond that of a ragged, slap-back boho band; a bit of a joke, but we found a resolve and that was a powerful asset."

Space would also be an asset for an expanding band and they found it temporarily in the East End.

part three

Deviation Street

Soon after the largely impromptu guerrilla performances at the Artesian Well had come to an end, Mick and Pete moved to Whitechapel in the East End of London. The House, situated at 10 Princelet Street, was brought to their attention by Alex Stowell, Mick's old art school buddy, who had joined him on harmonica at blues and folk jam sessions at St Martin's, as well as the occasional appearance at the Artesian Well. It was due to Alex's

continued art school connections that the nascent, and so far unnamed, Social Deviants would make the move to the East End. A number of reasons precipitated the move, space not being the least of them.

Ralph and Pete were having problems with their landlord back in the Grove and Mick was now becoming increasingly involved with a woman called Joy Hebditch, who he would later marry. The small dingy bedsit at Clifton Gardens was less than ideal in these circumstances. An ongoing series of housing booms had rendered a great number of the once spacious properties in the Notting Hill area into nothing more than hastily, and cheaply sub-divided bedsits. Therefore, a three floor house in the East End with a basement was a very attractive prospect indeed, even if the place was hardly fit for human habitation and would probably have been condemned if it had ever been inspected. After some bargaining with the two landlords — described by Mick as a couple of orthodox Hasidics with the full kit of hats, sidelocks, ZZ Top beards and long black coats, a father and son act, one in his forties and the other apparently in his early hundreds — a deal was struck. The landlords provided materials and the new tenants moved in rent free, in return providing the labour to fix the appalling condition of the electrical wiring.

Licking the house into a more habitable shape, the new Eastenders adapted to their new locale with considerable aplomb, and made the most of the local markets, bombsites, and building sites for cheap materials with which they could fix the house. They even had their own East End villains as resident neighbours, and the band returned in the dead of night after a gig on one occasion to find them spraying a stolen Jaguar in the middle of the street. The villains took a shine to the new residents and frequently made them gifts of knock off gear of some kind or other.

During Mick's tenure at Princelet Street a number of band members came and went. The most notable changes were the departure of originals Ralph Hodgson and Pete Munro, the acquisition of a drummer who in turn was replaced by Russell Hunter, and the arrival of guitarist Clive Maldoon, later to be replaced by Sid Bishop, and Mac MacDonnell, all of which was augmented by the inimitable Alex Stowell. Nearly all of them lived at some point in or around Princelet Street. Russell would sometimes share a house with Pete and Alex in the next street, at 12 Fournier Street, and for a while

Clive Maldoon did too. Both houses were crumbling mid eighteenth century buildings and in great need of repair. Although the place at Princelet Street was not without space, the downside was that the East End had its fair share of misery and the house itself was lacking any home comforts. Russell recalls:

> *I don't remember if there was* a *bathroom in Mick's, but there wasn't in number 12, just one wash basin in* a *kitchen, and one toilet for three floors and a basement. It was rough, but habitable, and Joy had made their rooms very bright and cosy. Incidentally, in Fournier Street we uncovered a sub-basement, a real priest-hole, just enough room to lie down, and with an ancient pewter candlestick with a yellow candle stub still in it. We were convinced that basement was haunted, icy chills would emanate from it on even the warmest nights, and it just felt, bad. Clive [Maldoon] tried to live there once when he became homeless, I think he lasted one night, and legged it. In hindsight, it was all fairly hideous—rats and all — but you put up with a lot when you're young(ish), or you did then anyway.*

Of the poor state of the Social Deviants' East End house, Sid says:

> *It was dark and dingy, the uncarpeted stairs covered in the fossilised evidence of countless semi-feral cats, and cold and draughty due to all the broken windows. At some stage in the past, it had been converted into several small flats, which individually were not too bad, but the overall impression was one of Victorian decay, and abject poverty echoing an earlier age . . . Yes, it was hideous, but it had* a *terrific atmosphere, you could sense that something was going on, and I was always enthusiastic about our weekly basement rehearsals. It must have had some of the same vibe as the Grateful Dead's Haight-Ashbury house in San Francisco.*

Whether or not the squalid house in London's East End recreated the same vibe as the Grateful Dead's, it is apparent that the intention to create

some sort of community was there.

International Times, or *IT* as it later became known, said of the house at Princelet Street: “A new breakout centre is opening in the East End — to be more specific, a cellar in Stepney. Basically it is centred around Mick Farren’s group the Social Deviants, aiming to provide a link between underground and surface activities, creating an atmosphere that anybody can become a part of.” The community based ethos that would become so identifiable with the Deviants and Pink Fairies had its roots in this early socio-communal experimentation.

The locality was home to another bunch of like minded musical miscreants called the Brothers Grimm, whose guitarist, Martin, had initially rented Alex Stowell a room. Not unlike Alex, Martin was also something of an artist, and the decor of his room bore testimony to some of his more outlandish creations. His artistic experimentations extended to customisation of his own guitars, which Mick regarded as works of art in their own right. In *Give The Anarchist A Cigarette* Mick says the Brothers Grimm, fronted by a gangly, uncoordinated singer, not unlike Joey Ramone, were: “Nearly a dozen years ahead of their time and could easily have appeared on the same bill with X-Ray Spex or Wreckless Eric.” Unfortunately, all that remains of the Brothers Grimm are posters advertising gigs of the day; no known recordings are believed to have been made of them.

At various times during the Deviants’ tenure in the East End, the houses in Princelet Street and Fournier Street were shelter for many of the band and their entourage, and it has been mooted that all of the band members did at some point live together as a commune. If Mick’s vision of the house at Princelet Street had been one of a community orientated “breakout centre,” where they could all live together, and local bands could practice and hang out, for others the idea of communal living was another matter entirely. Sid was married, with a child on the way, and both he and his wife were less than enamoured with the idea of a commune. Indeed, Sid’s domestic situation was a bone of contention throughout his stay with the Deviants and would be one of the factors leading to his eventual departure from the band.

If their own particular living conditions proved basic, the East End around them was much worse, with ancient decaying back to back terraces, bombsites filled with rubble, and a landscape still bearing the scars of the nightly Nazi bombing raids that took place during the Blitz. Derelicts, drunks and hookers proliferated the district, and many families were poverty stricken. The destitution and squalor, and its attendant social malaise in the East End, was a contributory factor in providing the band with their name.

An early line-up of the Social Deviants rehearsing in the basement of Princelet Street, circa 1967 (l-r) Alex Stowell and his portable lightshow, Clive Maldoon, Phil/Benny (on drums), Pete Munro, Mick Farren (Photograph courtesy of Mick Farren)

14-Hour Technicolour Dream poster - the Social Deviants opened the proceedings, April 29, 1967 (Artwork by Michael McInnerney, source Keen and LaRoe, Underground Graphics 1970)

part four

Social Deviancy

Mick Farren read an article in the *Observer* newspaper about the area of the East End in which most members of the band were living. The article stated that the London Borough of Tower Hamlets had a higher per capita percentage of social deviants than anywhere else in the country. This was the perfect choice for the band's name as far as Farren was concerned, and he swayed the other members into adopting it. The band not only had a new name in the Social Deviants, but also a drummer for the first time. There is some confusion as to the drummer's name, however. An *IT* report from June 1967 mentions a Social Deviants drummer called Phil, whilst Mick Farren refers to him as Benny in his autobiography. Benny was probably more a name of convenience, as Mick cannot recall much about him and has no idea what happened to him. Depending upon whose version you follow, Phil/Benny was a born again Zionist or born again Christian. But whatever his name or religious orientation, he was by all accounts an extremely bizarre character even by the standards of the other Social Deviants.

Phil/Benny had a penchant for mohair suits and bow ties and his idolisation of Joe Morello, the drummer for the Dave Brubeck Quartet, didn't sit comfortably with the ethos of the Social Deviants. Mick recalls that: "[Phil/ Benny's] idea of psychedelic percussion was constantly to shift from time signature to time signature, a demented exercise that caused Pete (also a closet modern jazzer) to do things to his bass that might have been Charlie Mingus, but were more likely sheer incompetence."

Another first was the addition of a guitarist who was considered reliable because he'd shown up for at least three rehearsals. His name was Clive Maldoon and he was from South London. According to Mick, "Maldoon was discovered via a guitarist-wanted ad in the *Melody Maker*. He had previously been in a bunch of Who/Small Faces type bands, and had written some okay Townshend influenced tunes. He also worked in a guitar store in the West End."

Mick initially took a shine to the new guitarist. “He was energetic and enthusiastic,” he says, “and had contacts for bits of bent gear.” Such contacts were potentially useful to any bottom of the rung band that was gigging for their bread and butter. However, it soon became apparent that “Grobber” had higher aspirations, and fancied himself as the next Pete Townshend or Roy Wood of the Move. Russell Hunter says “he had ambitions of being a much bigger pop star than he could ever be with us, and was never very happy with his lot in the Social Deviants.”

The band succeeded in padding out their sound with a guitarist and a drummer, but were without keyboards following the departure of Ralph Hodgson, who had left to return back North. On the other hand, having learned that a harmonica player was surplus to band requirements, the ubiquitous Alex Stowell became the band’s lightshow, with a contraption that has gone down in Social Deviants folklore. Alex always had something of the inventor about him. His interest in lighting effects came about whilst at art college, in the wake of a disastrous attempt to create “a kinetic art structure” in the form of a sphere made from disposable plastic coffee cups. From a junk shop he obtained an epidiascope and began experimenting with images projected onto his girlfriend’s basement wall, which flashed and strobed in time to jazz records. By the time the Social Deviants had re-grouped in the East End his experiments had advanced sufficiently enough for him to develop a prototype, albeit crude, psychedelic lightshow. According to Mick, Alex made “a passable impression of a B-movie mad scientist.”

Following the construction of a lighting contraption of sorts, built from industrial strength light bulbs, reflectors, old telephone switchboards, sheets of plywood and a veritable spaghetti of wires, the band was quite certain that the most likely outcome of Stowell’s electrical endeavours would be electrocution. Regarding his safety, Alex reflects:

> *I was never in any danger of electrocution (leaving aside mistakes and accidents), because the lights were controlled via* a *large box of noisy relays. I was handling twelve volts, I used a guitar shaped instrument, the left hand working the colours via metal contacts on three fingers to the metal neck of the instrument, the right hand*

welding a high speed contact of carbon rod to metal plate — carbon so it wouldn't stick — this produced some small sparks.

Eventually the lightshow was honed into a more manageable combination of boxes and Alex took it to the stage. This was an era of intrepid psychedelic lightshow pioneers, such as Jack Braceland and Mark Boyle, John Marsh, Joe Gannon and Peter Wynne-Wilson.

Boyle is arguably the originator of the psychedelic lightshow, at least of the psychedelic lightshow in England. Cutting his teeth at the poet Michael Horovitz's *Live New Departures* event in the early 1960s, Boyle, along with Jack Braceland, pioneered his lightshow for early Pink Floyd performances at John Hopkins's Notting Hill Free School, in All Saints Hall, off Westbourne Park Road. Boyle and Braceland became resident lighting technicians at the premier underground club UFO. In time the other three men, John Marsh, Joe Gannon and Peter Wynne-Wilson, would themselves become an integral part of the renowned Pink Floyd lighting experience, learning their craft in the UFO and Middle Earth club.

It was in this climate of nascent lightshow development that Alex Stowell began his own experiments in lighting. He explains: "At the time light shows were liquid light shows using slide projectors [and] blank slides, which they fed with eye droppers — coloured inks of water and oil based inks that don't mix but form bubbly patterns. These were shone onto the band and walls." From an account by Mick in *Give the Anarchist a Cigarette,* Alex's performances were just as likely to instigate psychotic episodes as they were to replicate a mellow psychedelic experience. "Alex aimed these blinding beams directly into the retinas of the audience and synthesised something akin to advanced brainwashing by the KGB," Mick writes.

Regular stage lighting, or even a regular psychedelic lightshow for that matter, was operated from a tower in the audience using a combination of traditional stage lighting equipment and/or oil slide light projections. But the Social Deviants lightshow was actually on the stage itself, in effect a living, breathing entity that moved around in the form of Alex himself. "For other groups it was a 'bolt on' and as such atmospheric only," says Alex. "Ideally the lamps would have been on rigs to move them around. As it was

we would point them where it suited us. Maybe it was Happening 44 where we first turned them on the audience."

In the days of experimental lighting the dangers of strobing were relatively unknown. One can only speculate what effect such an experience might have had on the impressionable and unsuspecting, drug-addled minds of an audience.

Today, Alex is somewhat modest about the impact of his lightshow: "The Pink Floyd had a strobe — capable of running at a regular speed — in their lightshow. I don't know what the state of knowledge, advice or law was in those days, or now. Our lights did not run at a regular speed, but these days, as you know, if a TV programme is going to show flashing lights they issue a warning beforehand."

In the relatively short cross town migration from west to east, the band not only acquired new premises, a new name, new members, and additional instrumentalists, they also got themselves a human lightshow, who, in effect, doubled up as another instrument.

Now all they needed was a gig.

part one

Underground Tentacles

Mick was not only keeping himself busy with the Social Deviants, he was also becoming increasingly immersed in other areas of the burgeoning underground scene in London. An acquaintance of Farren's, Zoe Harris, had advised he attend the launch party for the fledgling underground newspaper *IT.* The party was held at the Roundhouse in Chalk Farm, a venue that would be associated many times with the Deviants and the Pink Fairies in the years to come. The *IT* launch party featured all manner of performance artists, ranging from steel bands, through to the Soft Machine and Pink Floyd. The event turned out to be pivotal in Farren's life, not only because, as he puts it in his autobiography, "it was as though I had finally found my tribe," but at the Roundhouse he met John Hopkins for the first time.

John Hopkins, better known as Hoppy, was one of the organisers of the event and part of the team that was launching *IT.* The underground newspaper would feature heavily in Farren's life over the years. His involvement was casual to begin with, commencing soon after its inception in 1966, but increased significantly following its first bust in March 1967. By the turn of the decade he had gained editorial control, and Farren brought to *IT* a street based culture of dope, sex, rock'n'roll and revolution.

The underground press later proved relevant to the so called "community bands" that included in their number Hawkwind and the Pink Fairies. Farren says: "The relationship with the community bands was highly symbiotic. The underground press publicised them, which made it possible for them to tour and get record deals. They travelled around spreading the ethos, and the demand for the newspapers and magazines grew and flourished for a while." The relationship between bands and the underground press often went deeper than this, notably when the likes of *IT, Oz, Friends* and *Nasty Tales* started being busted. The Pink Fairies, Hawkwind and the Edgar Broughton Band raised awareness by playing benefit gigs, thus providing funds for legal costs and enabled the underground press to mount a defence. *IT* staged many other fundraising events in order to finance itself, and was also involved in the part ownership of the underground press distribution service in London, as well as in the underground rock club UFO. Historically, the UFO is said to have had its roots in the All Saints Hall, a church hall off All Saints Road in Notting Hill, famous for hosting one of Pink Floyd's early freeform outings. Established as a means of funding the Notting Hill Free School, it eventually moved to the West End, inspired by the *IT* launch party at the Roundhouse, and was situated in the basement confines of the Blarney Club.

UFO became the premier underground club in London. It not only provided the blueprint for much of what came after it, but it would also figure significantly in the history of the Deviants. In a growing but close knit underground scene, the club provided a network of contacts from which at least two future members of the Deviants and Pink Fairies arose. It also provided occasional employment for Mick Farren who, having already met Hoppy and established links with *IT,* secured a position working the door there.

In *Anarchist,* Mick recalls: "If the Deviants couldn't hustle together a gig of some kind (which in those days was most Friday nights), I'd spend three or four highly intense hours confronting a constant stream of freaks in all their manic glory."

UFO used the basis of the *IT* launch party at the Roundhouse as its template. There were other influences too: Chet Helms's Family Dog

organisation in the USA was already putting on shows at the Avalon Ballroom, as was Bill Graham at the Fillmore Auditorium.

Russell Hunter, a regular at UFO, remembers the club with fondness:

> *UFO took place on* a *Friday, dusk to dawn. It was* the *place to go in the early days, initially the only place. It was wonderful, I loved it, we all did. Strange and wonderful characters such as Manfred, the very large avuncular German acid dealer were always there. It seems impossible to believe now that in those days, the idea of putting oil on a slide and shining a projector through it was just so amazing to behold and good drugs were freely distributed, and everyone just got on. There was* a *band that was put on at about 5:30 in the morning to drive people out, the Hydrogen Jukebox, very avant-garde jazz, just honking and squealing really, quite hard work when one was feeling* a *little frail after a busy night. Worked a treat, on they came, and we all fled for the exit.*

UFO became a bone of contention for Farren; so too one of the managers of the club, Joe Boyd. Another manager was Hoppy, who had taken a shine to Mick upon their first meeting at the Roundhouse, and it was Hoppy who had been responsible for hiring Farren as a doorman, as well as inspiring his involvement with *IT.* Boyd, on the other hand was less inclined towards Farren and the Social Deviants, and allegedly said they would only play UFO over his dead body. Talking to Jonathon Green in 1987, Boyd explained how this aversion to the Social Deviants came about: “At one point Hoppy handed me this demo tape and said, ’This guy has been pestering me, he really wants to play UFO.’ It was a tape of the Social Deviants. So I listened to about thirty seconds of it and said, ’This is garbage.’ Then about a week later [Hoppy would] bring it up again: ’This guy keeps calling me, he came round to see me, he says the tape isn’t really a proper reflection of how good the group is.”

Boyd went to see the band rehearse at their East End base, but was no more impressed with their music, and commented later, “they sounded just as bad as they did on the demo tape.”

Boyd's idea of English underground music was pastoral folk music. The fact that this noisy bunch of speed freak distortion merchants did not fit into Boyd's parameters was irrelevant, according to Farren. "The underground was mushrooming and, for better or worse," Farren says, "I seemed to be in the thick of it. I was writing angry polemics and conspiring with Miles at *IT,* running the band and had actually been hired by Hoppy to troubleshoot the door at UFO, dealing with tripped out psychos, threatening skins and undercover drugs squad in Carnaby Street sunglasses."

Boyd eventually relented. He told Jonathon Green in 1987: "Subsequent to my refusal to book the Deviants, we used to have this 5am slot auditioning bands and after [Mick] had been helping out for a few months we gave the Social Deviants a 5am slot once, and that was over my dead body — the sole appearance of the Social Deviants at UFO." It is interesting to speculate as to whether the Social Deviants had the same diasporic effect on the audience at 5am as Hydrogen Jukebox.

Farren sees Boyd's veto of the band differently: "Joe claims it was just reward for loyal service, while I maintain that he had to cave in when faced with the fact that the Deviants not playing UFO was plainly absurd. Back then everything was much smaller and more accessible. The counterculture was a hamlet in which everyone knew everyone else." Mick concludes: "Boyd didn't have the balls to declare that we were barred. He just made excuses not to book us, but then pressure from our mates, especially Sue Miles, forced him to put us back on at the Roundhouse." If Boyd did acquiesce, it would not be the last time that he and Farren had their disagreements. Boyd was steadfast in his refusal to offer the band a return booking at UFO, but his business partner Hoppy had no such qualms, and the Social Deviants would play an event that marked a watershed in the development of the British underground.

The 14-Hour Technicolour Dream was the brainchild of the indomitable Hoppy and it took place at the Alexander Palace, in the outer reaches of North West London. It was staged as a bust fund for *IT,* and, in the words of Hoppy, as "a giant benefit against fuzz action." The first bust for *IT* came in March 1967. By association, Hoppy, who had been busted for possession of a small amount of hashish, was increasingly regarded as a thorn in the side of the authorities. In typical Hoppy style, rather than simply lie down and

accept his fate, he set about organising an extravaganza that was to be regarded as an epochal moment in the development of the British underground. The 14-Hour Technicolour Dream was an amalgamation of all manner of underground performers, from avant-garde performance artists, mime troupes, poets, to rock bands and even a Victorian style funfair in the form of a helter skelter. Farren says of it in his autobiography: “It had become the lavish summation of all that had gone before. Everything that had been growing and developing over the previous two years had been brought together in one place.”

The event has been written about in detail many times, but of particular relevance here is the fact that the Social Deviants were booked by Hoppy to open the show. In a line up that included the likes of Pink Floyd, the Move and Soft Machine, and reads like a Who’s Who of the underground music scene, the Social Deviants had the dubious pleasure of kicking off the proceedings at about 8pm. Farren’s memory of their performance is somewhat vague. “I believe we were pretty rank behind a combination of jitters at the size of the crowd, an acoustic nightmare of a hall and a PA still in shakedown mode,” he recalls.

Opinions on the performance are not wholly good, with some describing the Deviants as “gloriously abysmal agit rockers” who “thrashed and trashed Chuck Berry riffs.” Farren suggests that the only advantage of going on first was that it left the band to occupy themselves and enjoy the rest of the evening as they pleased. Occupy themselves they did, and although Farren didn’t get lucky and cop one of the randomly LSD spiked sugar cubes supposedly being distributed on the door, he did watch British psychedelic history unfold in a haze of “hash, speed, beer, rum, Scotch, and . . . a little wine.”

Anyone who was anyone on the scene was there, including John Lennon and Paul McCartney. Most accounts estimate the size of the audience at being around 10-11,000. The success of the 14-Technicolor Dream was met with mixed reactions: there were those freaks that felt it a coming together of like minds, and others that considered the underground no longer to be underground. Although bands like Pink Floyd and Soft Machine cemented their position that night as prime movers on the UK scene, there were some lesser known artists that made an impression, notably Arthur Brown, who

would hit the number one spot with Fire, and Tomorrow, featuring future Pink Fairy Twink.

The Deviants may not have garnered plaudits to quite the same level in that defining moment in British musical history, and were still struggling against an impasse with Joe Boyd over appearing at UFO, but help often comes when one least expects it, and the Social Deviants were just about to receive a big unexpected helping hand.

UFO at the Roundhouse poster – Pantalian's Chariot, Social Deviants and Exploding Galaxy, September 22, 1967 (Artwork by Michael Sharp, courtesy of Farren, Get On Down)

part two

Stripclubs, Skinheads, Fuzz and Dialectics

Jack Braceland was originally from Watford, where he ran a nudist colony before he relocated to London to establish one of the earliest lightshows, Five Acre Lights. Prior to moving on to UFO, he became involved with Hoppy's London Free School venture at the All Saints Hall in Notting Hill, where, along with Mark Boyle, he was responsible for the early Pink Floyd lightshows. In *Days In The Life* Joe Boyd recounts: "Hoppy knew him and we gave him a little corner of UFO. He didn't have the main lightshow but he had a corner and people could go dance in his lights."

Whilst working at UFO for Boyd, Braceland took over an ex-strip club and shebeen at 44 Gerrard Street in Soho. Luckily, not everyone with some influence shared Joe Boyd's dislike of the Social Deviants. Hoppy's sympathies had been made evident when he booked the band for the 14-Hour Technicolour Dream. When Braceland, already a part of Boyd's inner circle, had the basement of the Gerrard Street premises converted, he invited the Social Deviants to play a residency throughout the summer of 1967. Whether this support was borne of a genuine fondness for the band, or merely down to tenacious hustling on Farren's part is not known, but a residency under Boyd's nose made things much sweeter for Farren.

The Social Deviants began their residency at the Happening 44 club on May 20, 1967, supported by an exotic dance group, according to one ad. "Happening 44 was one of the weirdest hippy dungeons anywhere," says Mick of the subterranean cellar bar on Gerrard Street. On the edge of Chinatown, its location alone ensured that the newly found hippy clientele would be interspersed on any given night with a smattering of pimps, pushers, prostitutes, junkies and villains. The place still bore vestiges of its previous existence as a sex club and cans of old porn films littered the back room, as did an assortment of sex toys and bondage gear, which the Social Deviants occasionally incorporated into their stage act.

Associates of the notorious Richardson Gang would drop by, mistakenly thinking the club was still good for late night boozing. For Mick at least, the most welcome accidental visitors were the "chemically confused strippers," who wandered in after finishing stints at the other clubs in and around Soho, and sometimes got up on stage with the band to strut their stuff dressed only in stockings and a g-string.

For a few months through the summer and autumn of 1967, Happening 44 served as a showcase for new bands and musicians. The Sam Gopal Dream, one of Lemmy's early bands, and Roy Harper played there. Joe Boyd is supposed to have discovered Fairport Convention there. The club also hosted all manner of eccentric acts, such as Shiva's Children, who performed a weird ballet accompanied by chants and percussion. Tales of Olin, Sensory Armada, the Londoners, Zoe and Breakthru, all long forgotten, also put in an appearance.

Happening 44 provided a late night lig for passing musicians. John Mayall was once spotted flaunting a particularly snazzy hand carved Laurel Canyon guitar, and on another night a drunken Eric Burdon declared to Farren that the Deviants were the shape of things to come. It would take another ten years and the advent of punk before Burdon's drunken prophecy was anything like realised.

Although the residency undoubtedly provided a lifeline for the Social Deviants, Farren admits that the novelty of such a regular gig wears off and monotony sets in. Ripped on speed, more often than not they could "blast all night." At other times Farren would simply sit on the edge of the stage, like some be-afroed Johnny Rotten, staring malevolently at the audience, trapped in a mesmerising vortex of Alex Stowell's lights, an audio-visual onslaught to truly behold.

The band was encouraged enough by the audience — which they considered open minded or plain indifferent or both — to introduce a degree of experimentation to their set. One instance of experimentation came courtesy of the yet unreleased debut album by the unknown Velvet Underground. Farren elaborates in an interview with Richie Unterberger, posted on the Perfect Sound Forever website in 1996: "The tapes were allegedly stolen from Joe Boyd by the Social Deviants, who promptly had them stolen off themselves." Before the Velvet's album had hit the streets, the Social Deviants had Waiting For The Man down to pat. "Artistically we robbed them blind," Farren says in his autobiography. The band also performed a song from the demo tape called Prominent Men, which didn't appear on the album when it was eventually released. For many years Farren wondered whether he hadn't just dreamed it up, until its appearance on a Velvet Underground box set in the early 1990s.

Aside from the opportunity that it gave the Social Deviants to explore new realms of experimentation and cover versions, the residency at Happening 44 enabled the band to build a following, as well as find out who their friends were. "We were able to stabilise the line up and then we got used to doing what we did regularly in front of people," he says.

Despite claims that they couldn't play, the unlikely band of motley characters were proving the critics wrong. Friends like Hoppy and Jack Braceland provided much needed support at a time when Joe Boyd had

effectively barred them from the premier underground club in the country. Securing gigs for this early line up of the Social Deviants was not always easy. The band were regarded as too outlandish, or viewed with suspicion — the opprobrium attached to the name “Social Deviants” conjured images of axe wielding psychopaths or child molesters. On a gigging circuit where mainstream blues or run of the mill beat bands were the staple, the Social Deviants were likely to be on a glaringly mismatched bill if booked at all. One such bill was instrumental in the departure of drummer Phil/Benny.

'Caught by the fuzz!' - Mick has a run in with the law somewhere near Epping Forest. (Photograph by Robin Morrison, courtesy of Dinah Morrison)

The band had been booked to support Geno Washington and the Ram Jam Band. Although the exact location and name of the venue has been lost to the mists of time, Mick believes it was somewhere in the South London suburbs. Being a purveyor of fast energetic soul, in a similar vein to the Stax and Motown formulas, the following that Geno attracted was of the fanatical skinhead kind, none too kindly disposed to a bunch of long haired, paisley and leather clad hippy freaks. The audience reaction as the curtains opened was instantaneous and somewhat predictable. In *Anarchist,* Mick describes it like this: “Straight at the stage, at us — like one of those Chinese Red Army Human waves out of the Korean War. Have you ever seen a drummer wrap his arms around his entire kit, pick it up and run? Not easy, but Benny accomplished it.” For Phil/Benny it was the final straw and he left the band soon afterwards. Russell Hunter filled the vacancy, via a mutual acquaintance of both Mick and Russell at UFO.

Apart from Happening 44 and the small club or pub gigs that they did manage to secure, a number of gigs came through the spring and summer that were memorable if only for the chaos that ensued. The band were no longer promoting themselves as a straightforward rock'n'roll act, but rather their shows as an event. One ad for a gig at The Old Place at 39 Gerrard Street, not far from Happening 44, described the Social Deviants as "audio-visual rock'n'roll." Another gig at the Duke of York pub in Rathbone Place, W1, was billed as a "mixed media show" with "lightshow, films, poetry readings." "Multi-media was kind of a code for 'psychedelic'," confesses Mick, "and therefore a gathering of druggies."

The Duke of York show was broken up by a police raid. In a report they called "Cops Break Up Duke of York Mixed Media Show," *IT* related how a plain clothes policeman had been trying to entrap people into selling drugs throughout and after the Deviants' two sets. He also had the temerity to ask Jack Moore, projectionist and lighting engineer, to "show dirty films." The police did eventually bust the club at eleven o'clock, but failed in their search for drugs and attempts to find underage drinkers on the premises. They then threatened to close the place down if the publican allowed this kind of event to happen again.

Mick thinks it was possibly the only "Mixed Media" event held at the Duke of York, "although it remained a good West End boozer for hippies." It was not the only time the Social Deviants tangled with the long arm of the law. An earlier gig at the Theatre Royal in Stratford in East London, another multi-media art event, also resulted in police action. The Social Deviants, invited along by radical theatrical producer and lifelong socialist, Joan Littlewood, were judged to have gone down so well they were encouraged by Littlewood to do a second impromptu set, outside the theatre on Angel Lane. A Social Deviants set was a most noisome experience, and out on the streets the din was perceived as nothing short of a major breach of the peace.

Along with other bands of the time, the Social Deviants increasingly became prey to the overzealous "fuzz." According to *IT:* "Judith, a girlfriend of the Social Deviants was apparently stopped on the way home from the 14-Hour Technicolour Dream, and police 'hit the roof' and insisted

she go to the station to be searched, when they heard she had been with the Deviants to the 14-Hour Dream."

Not one to take injustice lying down, and incensed at the persecution of so many of his friends, Mick Farren used his recently acquired position as contributor to *IT* to air his disavowals of Her Majesty's Police Force. In the middle of June, Farren wrote an article called "Pop In The Police State" in which he catalogued a list of oppressive incidents that the counterculture had recently been subjected to by the establishment. He cited tabloid journalism as one, and singled out a *News of the World* series called "Pop Stars and Drugs." Also listed were police strip searches of punters at clubs like Tiles, the numerous raids for drugs on parties, clubs, cafes and private homes elsewhere, and the frequent Customs search of pop groups at London airport.

Less than a week after the publication of the article, Farren and members of the Social Deviants were stopped again in their black transit on the way home from a gig at Happening 44. *IT* would report this incident in some detail. However, the Social Deviants were not necessarily targets per se. Asked whether the band was targeted because of his scathing attacks on the police in *IT,* Mick says: "Not on the street level. Some days you could hardly pass a couple of coppers without getting a pull. It was all coppers on foot and in Panda cars. Really it was young coppers with an easy target to fuck with. This is not to say there wasn't a concerted effort on the part of the Home Office and senior police to stamp on the underground as in the *IT* and Stones busts."

In addition to the heat coming down on UFO, underground newspapers and Hoppy, there was the high profile bust of the Rolling Stones at Redlands early in 1967. Jagger and Richards were made counterculture scapegoats and briefly jailed for minor drug offences, before a public outcry (led by the most unlikely of allies, William Rees Mogg of *The Times* newspaper) resulted in their release.

It was more than apparent that the authorities had declared open season on the underground, and barely a week passed without reports of police harassment in the pages of *IT,* headed by one of the most vociferous of critics, Mick Farren. In the June 23 edition of *IT* a sub-editorial column by Farren reads in part: "I hate. I hate cops. I hate them when they railroad

Hoppy . . . I hate them when they break down my front door and point guns at my wife. I also hate them when they play games that involve my friends going to jail, and when they stop and search me simply because I am a musician." Farren's disenchantment with the blind idealism of the love and peace ethos of the flower generation was apparent before the Summer of Love had even fully bloomed. He concludes the editorial: "I am never going to love policemen, whatever the hippies tell me."

Farren's antipathy towards the police would become even more obvious on the Deviant's first LP *Ptooff!* It's hardly coincidental that one of the songs, Charlie, referred to cop killing.

Contrary to some reports that he answered an ad, it was an acquaintance that led Russell Hunter to the Social Deviants. "I was tipped off by a friend, Mick Laslett, who did lights at UFO, that the Social Deviants were looking for a new drummer," explains Russell, "and he introduced me to Micky Farren." After meeting Mick, Russell had his drums sent up from Dorset, and, for the first time since leaving the south west of England, was in a band once more. Whatever the circumstances of his joining the band, his first gig with the Social Deviants was sometime in late June or July of 1967, another suitably shambolic outing in the shape of The Congress on the Dialectics of Liberation, a conference held at the Roundhouse.

The Congress on the Dialectics of Liberation took place between July 14–30, 1967, and was organised by several radical psychiatrists, amongst them R.D. Laing and David Cooper. It comprised of seminars and lectures relating to Vietnam, Black Power and the student movement, as well as to "free interaction" and the relationship between personal and political liberation. The conference was given some extra clout by the number of left wing and counterculture luminaries lending their support: Alan Ginsberg, Emmett Grogan of the San Francisco Diggers, Herbert Marcuse, American Black Power activist Stokely Carmichael and UK counterpart Michael X, to name a few. Carolee Schneeman, the New York conceptual artist and choreographer, or "happening artist" as *IT* would have it, had the task of arranging post conference entertainment.

The Social Deviants were booked to play at a closing event on Saturday, June 29, at 9.30pm. This was another inappropriate booking, and Mick Farren says in his autobiography: "Some idiot told Carolee that the Social

Deviants were the authentic music of the underground, so we were hired. I believe she was under the impression that we were some electronic windchime ensemble, or at least the basically acoustic cacophony of The Fugs, because when we slammed into a teeth-grinding fuzz-tone thrash, a few people actually blanched."

It was Russell Hunter's first gig with the band and they were woefully under rehearsed. To compound matters, technical problems further hampered the performance. Russell remembers it well: "Just about everything broke or blew up, and I had to fill in time with some godawful impromptu attempt at a solo. Then the drums fell to bits and silence reigned — probably a mercy." The band thrashed their way through an appalling set and, according to Mick, only winged it by dint of ferocity rather than sound.

Russell Hunter's arrival heralded the beginning of an era of personnel upheavals that resulted in the band changing their name to the Deviants, and settling for a core nucleus of members that would remain relatively intact enough to record three Deviants albums.

The raving Social Deviants and exotic dancing by Tales of Olin – Happening 44 , June 3, 1967. (Courtesy Jenny Ashworth)

part three

The Flight to Lowlands Paradise

Clive Maldoon had started to act a bit strange and by the summer of 1967 was failing to show up for rehearsals before disappearing altogether for a couple of weeks. The guitarist had auditioned as a replacement for the Move's bass player, Ace Kefford, but Muldoon's somewhat lofty musical ambitions proved to be his undoing. The hapless Grobber, cocksure of getting the Move gig, had dropped the Social Deviants only to discover that he had been unsuccessful in his audition. When he came crawling back with his tail between his legs, it was already too late. He had been replaced. To an extent, Maldoon did briefly reach the elevated status of rock star. Says Mick: "He was later the singer in a band called Bodast with Steve Howe. They had money behind them and opened for Hendrix at the Albert Hall, but that was the end of him/them, because Maldoon got the jitters and wound up so drunk he fell off the stage." Russell has a similar memory of Maldoon's post Deviants bid for rock stardom: "I do remember him at the Albert Hall, singing — no guitar — in a band that opened for, I think, Chuck Berry. He was great, he fell off the front of the Albert Hall Stage."

After Steve Howe left Bodast at the end of 1969 to join Yes, Maldoon formed a duo with Bodast bassist Dave Curtiss, and rather unimaginatively called themselves Curtiss Maldoon. The duo was picked up by Deep Purple's management and recorded two albums for Purple Records (released in 1971 and 1973). Both competent musicians able to adapt to any number of instruments, the Curtiss and Maldoon sound was bolstered by future Ian Gillan Band bassist John McCoy and drummer Liam Genocky. They toured the USA, supporting Badfinger.

Curtiss was not happy to be associated with the second album, which was hastily recorded and rush released, and so it came out under the name Maldoon Maldoon. Having failed to achieve any critical or commercial success the duo went their separate ways. Curtiss would give up the bass to return to the nine to five grind, whilst Maldoon sadly died of an accidental heroin overdose in 1976. That might have been the end of the story had it not been for Maldoon's niece, Christine Leach, who re-recorded a version of a Curtiss Maldoon track called Sepheryn. This came to the attention of

Madonna, who was impressed enough by Sepheryn to record her own version of the song, renaming it Ray Of Light, and reaching number two in the UK Top Forty in May 1998. Twenty two years after his death, Clive Maldoon finally achieved the success he so greatly craved as a young, struggling musician with the Social Deviants.

In October 1967, having left the Southside Blues Band and buzzing with his new found love of west coast psychedelia, Sid Bishop felt it was time again to join a band. Courtesy of the ubiquitous *Melody Maker* classifieds section, Sid landed an audition with the Deviants. “One Sunday, my head full of Hendrix and the Grateful Dead, I took my guitar in one hand, and my amp in the other, and made my way from my house in Brixton to a flat just off the Whitechapel Road,” Sid recalls. “If I ever laboured under the impression that I had long hair, or dressed weird, then these guys were just in a totally different league! We played through a few things, and seemed to hit it off, and I was in, apparently.” Mick Farren says of Sid’s recruitment: “When he listed his favourite guitarists as Les Paul and Frank Zappa, we decided that he was our boy, all but sight unseen.”

Sid joined the band in time for the next wave of personnel upheavals. Their first gig with the new guitarist was on November 10, 1967, at a Christmas bash for the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) at their headquarters in Great Portland Street. It was another ill fitting bill with Sydney Lipton, a big band leader, topping it. However, the social events organiser of RIBA was hip to the underground trip, and other diverse artists appeared, such as an underground political theatre company called the Archtypical Cartoon Theatre, and Yoko Ono, who had a “Happening” and showed her *No. 4 Film.*

Hot on the heels of the RIBA gig came a trip to Holland. Having been refused work permits for a date in Amsterdam earlier in the year, with no reason given, the band was now booked to play the Flight To Lowlands Paradise event in Utrecht. The band didn’t fly there, but caught a cross channel ferry from Harwich. The event took place on Friday and Saturday, November 24-25, 1967, and was organised by the Dutch underground with the assistance of *Hitweek* magazine and the national TV company. “Somewhat unromantically,” Sid recalls, “we had got there, not in our own

van, but by a combination of train and overnight ferry, carrying all our stuff with us, except for amps of course, which were supplied there."

Utrecht's Margriethal, a hall similar in size to London's Earl's Court, was the setting, a far cry from the paradise promised by the name of the event. As Sid puts it: "There were around sixty bands on over three days in some gigantic cowshed about half a mile square." Most of the bands were German or Dutch, and *IT* listed Group 69, the Blues Dimensions, Gloria, Moez Moez, and Cuby and the Blizzards among them. The Crazy World of Arthur Brown was meant to be the main attraction, but didn't show up, leaving the Deviants top of the bill, supported by the Exploding Galaxy.

From the outset nothing went to plan and vast quantities of alcohol and dope were needed to get the band through the weekend. According to Mick there was considerable confusion over where they were meant to sleep. Alex Stowell says of the sleeping arrangements: "Someone had arranged a place to stay, which turned out to be one bedroom, with one bed to be shared with about half a dozen people — some of whom I didn't know. I think we slept — if you can call it that — clothed across the bed. I don't remember Mick being there; he probably got himself a better deal." Sid also recalls the band spending one night in Amsterdam railway station. Russell has similar memories of their accommodation: "We ended up invading some poor benevolent local chap and overrunning his little flat, which was freezing cold, so we all went out and got drunk in a succession of bars, on top of plentiful quantities of dope, ups, downs and sideways."

The band's performance wasn't too great, either, and Sid admits to being "awful. I'd forgotten cues and stuff."

Alex, for whom the Lowlands gig would turn out to be his last, has told of complications relating to the transportation and operation of his lighting rig. Right up to their departure for Holland, he was working on a new rig that would be up to the task of the large scale Utrecht gig. Unfortunately, this left no time to test it. In addition to mutterings from the band about having to drag the heavy rig all the way to Holland and back, the confounded contraption conspired to malfunction. Alex says: "I needed half a bottle of scotch in order to stand up. Come the performance the light machine instantly jams due to heat, all except the mirror, which I worked to best effect like some kind of strobe. It turns out that the audience was too

stoned, or too intent on having a good time to see any fault in our performance."

No one in the band considered the venue a particularly suitable one. Says Mick: "The entire show was plagued by murderous acoustics, a lack of heat [and] pitifully underpowered equipment."

Steve Sparkes, who had befriended Mick Farren when he worked the door at UFO, and since become a publicist and manager of sorts for the band, recalls: "We did a monstrous pop festival in Utrecht. The festival was weird. It was in an aircraft hangar and they had three stages and they had bands playing on each stage at the same time. I've never in my life heard so many versions of Purple Haze, 'cos every band, with the exception of the Deviants, played Purple Haze."

The Lowlands Paradise was notable in that DJ John Peel accompanied the Deviants on the trip. Although Peel had made the transition from pirate radio to BBC Radio 1, he was one of the few radio DJs to champion underground music. Peel also had a regular music column in *IT,* named after his radio show, The Perfumed Garden. While Peel would play obscure (at the time) artists on the radio, such as Captain Beefheart, Country Joe and the Fish, Moby Grape and Lightnin' Hopkins, for his *IT* column he provided coverage for even more obscure artists. Peel wrote about long since forgotten psychedelic bands with evocative names like the Giant Sun Trolley, Mable Greer's Toyshop and King Ida's Watch Chain, many of which would never press a record.

One band mentioned by Peel in his column was the Social Deviants. Friendly with Farren through their connections at *IT*, the DJ would later provide the sleeve notes for *Ptooff!,* the debut LP by the Deviants, and on the Utrecht trip, he crashed out with the band in an Amsterdam attic. "He was a nice guy," recalls Sid, "but at times a trifle incomprehensible. I'd be sitting chatting to him, then he would go off on a tangent, wittering on about cycling across Hyde Park." Steve Sparkes remembers that "John Peel wandered round for the whole of this festival complaining that he couldn't get laid, and I got kidnapped by a six foot four Dutch girl, and ended up in an attic in the Hague."

In his sleeve notes to *Ptooff!,* Peel makes reference to the Dutch excursion: “Several coffees later the Deviants and I travelled on the Flight to Lowlands Paradise in Utrecht, in which several thousand bewildered people heard a minimum of three bands, playing simultaneously, all night. Since then Mick has become so good a friend that it is difficult to judge the group with objectivity.” A few years later, Peel was quoted as saying: “[They] were always a terrible band. I saw them play a few times, and I’ve got their records and I used to play them. I liked the idea of the Deviants. They were plainly no good . . .” Whatever his views of the band, there is no denying that John Peel would play a significant part in their progress over the coming months.

The Lowlands Paradise experience put a considerable strain on relationships within the band. “As a result,” says Mick, “we commenced drinking the moment we arrived and didn’t stop until we were back on the boat train. Throughout the course of the ordeal we began to get poisonously irritated with each other.” It proved the final straw for two members of the Deviants entourage. On the ferry back to Harwich, Pete Munro and Alex declared they’d had enough. Alex cites a number of reasons for their departure:

> *The squalor of our gigs, especially the dressing room if you could call it that — I am most likely talking about Happening 44. I think we bore the squalid conditions easier before the big gigs because we felt we were going up; after, we were going downhill back into the shit we had just temporarily left and couldn’t see any future in what the band were doing. Pete and I lived in the same house; I think that we felt more ’artistic’ or superior in some way. Mick was more attracted to funkier things, to put it diplomatically, and he wasn’t much for compromising. Anyway there was obviously some disagreement about the direction we were going.*

Alex gave up lighting for good after he left the Social Deviants, and Pete utilised his building skills to make some money. The band, he says, “were making expenses, or nothing . . . went on in the grey for many years. Pete eventually went back to Canada. I haven’t heard from him since. I am still building and want to get out of it, but at sixty two. . . Tough, eh?”

Losing two members in one go, especially after such a fraught experience, might well spell the end for any less hardy band, but the remaining members of the Deviants — Mick, Russell and Sid — soldiered on. Sid, the new boy in the band, "had much more reason to be both daunted and appalled by the ways of the Deviants," recalled Mick. Instead, he "was taking it all in his stride and expressed his willingness to stick around for whatever might come next." Sid says today: "I didn't think it was all that bad. Certainly it was chaotic, and badly organised in many ways and we were left wandering around town with little or no money for three days, but all that's par for the course really. No worse than dozens of other gigs I've done."

Russell, described by Mick as being the "band's resident black wind of negativity," surprised everyone, no less Mick himself, when he decided to stick around if they could find a way to continue. Contrary to popular opinion, Russell thought the Flight To Lowlands Paradise "was wonderful, I loved it . . . [but] somewhere through the haze I gathered that Pete was very unhappy about something or other, and Mad Alex had some problems with his ultra-extraordinary home-built lighting Dalek, and when we got home, as you say, they left. Beats me. I know I loved it, but the details escape me."

Before any recruitment plans were put into action, Mick, not unaffected by the Utrecht experience, and in actual fact quite depressed by it, immediately sought solace and went to stay with a friend of his wife in Carlisle. This was the sixties after all, and he and Joy had an open relationship. Following a week of rest and recreation, largely spent in bed, aided by frequent sex with Joy's friend Carol, and copious quantities of vodka, hashish and food, Mick returned somewhat reluctantly to London. His black mood was soon to lift however, as the fortune of the Deviants took a turn for the better.

part one

Son of a Millionaire

Certainly, the band was changing. Ralph Hodgson, the keyboard player, had already left and returned to Sunderland, Pete Munro was becoming more dissatisfied with both the band and his role in it, whilst Maldoon had his eyes on bigger prizes. Mick and Joy on the other hand had moved from the East End into an apartment above the Shaftesbury Theatre at 212 Shaftesbury Avenue in the West End of London. While Mick would still return for rehearsals at Princelet Street, the move met with the next major phase of the band's career.

212 Shaftesbury Avenue is the stuff of Deviants legend, not least of all because so many members and associates of the band frequently stayed or lived there. Just as significantly, Mick cemented his friendship with the future Deviants and Pink Fairies bass guitar stalwart Duncan Sanderson, better known as Sandy, with whom he and Joy, and others, would share 212. As to how a bunch of hippy freaks came to occupy a prime piece of real estate in a building shared by bankers and psychiatrists in the heart of London's West End is another matter. The tenancy had been secured by a wealthy American, who it later transpired was an international cocaine

dealer. The wealthy American left town in a hurry, but not before he had legitimately transferred the lease over to Sandy and Chris Rowley.

In the meantime, Sandy had yet to learn the bass and the band needed a bass player. Sid had proved himself a worthy replacement for Maldoon on guitar following the Utrecht fiasco when the band nearly imploded, and Pete Munro was replaced on bass by Cord Rees, who at first seemed a suitable substitute. Rees's recruitment perked him Mick a bit: "[Rees] was a seemingly competent bass player and looked absolutely like the generic hippy musician," says Mick.

The band found another silver lining on an otherwise frequently grey cloud, when they got involved with a young millionaire called Nigel Samuel. Nigel Samuel had inherited a huge fortune when his father committed suicide when Nigel was only thirteen. The loss had a profound effect and Nigel was known for going "a bit crazy" upon the anniversary of his father's death. Howard Samuel had been a socialist property tycoon, and as Mick Farren has it, not only had he owned close to half of London, which Nigel inherited, but was also a major financial backer of the Labour Party. After Howard Samuel's death, Harold Wilson's own lawyer, Lord Goodman, was given the task of administering the estate. Goodman oversaw Nigel's formative years. According to Mick in his autobiography: "Nigel developed a venomous loathing of politicians, and his involvement in the underground was almost certainly his way of using his wealth to stick it to the power elite."

Farren knew Nigel Samuel from his financial involvment with *IT.* Although Farren was a part of the *IT* editorial team, he found things had changed completely on one occasion upon his return following a stint with the band. The new *IT* management team of Bill Levy and David Hall formulated plans that precluded Farren, and gave Samuel the onerous task of sacking him. Perhaps it was by way of an apology that Samuel later made Farren and the band an offer they couldn't refuse. Meeting up for a drink, Nigel Samuel told Mick that he was willing to put up the money for a Deviants album. Having already been turned down by several record labels, this was one gift horse that the Deviants certainly wouldn't look in the mouth. Nigel was an insecure man and, as a consequence, a heavy alcoholic with an unpredictable personality. In *Anarchist,* Mick points out that like so

many people of inherited wealth, being so rich and surrounded by sycophants and hangers on made Samuel's worldview "a distortion of his entourage." Mick goes on to say: "Outside our immediate circle there were plenty of Samuel hangers-on ready to advise on how the Deviants' album should be made, or not made at all." Under these circumstances, the eventuality of the LP ever reaching fruition was sometimes doubtful. In an interview with Jonathon Green, Mick said: "[Samuel] was an incredible alcoholic and we'd go off to Wheelers and sit with him and drink whiskey and Guinness and eat oysters and try to get money out of him so we could go on living and recording too. He was a terrible trial, he changed his mind every day." Being at Samuel's whim, the band was keen to get things underway.

Mick had always been extremely critical over the issue of the underground pandering to the corporate capitalist music industry, but now he had to put his — or, more precisely, Nigel Samuel's — money where his mouth was. Several groups, including Mick and the Social Deviants, Shiva's Children and Dreamland Express had already attempted to form a collective of underground bands and acts. *IT* reported that they were: "Getting together to form a non profit making management cooperative to circumvent a great deal of the exploitation that is appearing on the underground pop scene." Alan Reid of Shiva's Children told *IT* that "It was time that at least one management organisation concentrated on helping groups to be creative, rather than filling its own pockets. Too many small time hustlers think they can make a great deal of bread out of the good music that the scene has helped to create."

The cooperative did appear to achieve the goal of securing gigs and protecting their immediate interests on a relatively parochial underground circuit, and the Social Deviants and Shiva's Children were often found sharing a bill, or alternating nights at Happening 44 or Middle Earth. But when it came to record deals, the major record companies were the only option available. The majors were scooping up the cream of the underground, but many of the bands simply weren't good enough, or just weren't commercial enough. Sid neatly sums up the situation: "Due to the somewhat anarchic, not to mention very loud, nature of the music that we played — we were really more of an early punk band than the psychedelic

band we are now more usually classified as — it quickly became evident that in those days no major record company would touch us with a barge pole."

The Deviants had been turned down by several major labels, including Pye and Decca. They even pitched themselves to the then inchoate Beatles' Apple label. Mick says: "We used a Lennon contact to talk to some A&R guy who was an ex-Beatles flunky. He wanted something like Badfinger." The options were running out, but producing your own record was relatively unheard of in the sixties, especially for an unsigned underground group. Perhaps Nigel Samuel was just cocking another snook at his one-time establishment guardians, but Mick thinks his heart was generally in the right place: "He wanted to start a record label and we seemed ideal material." And start a record label is what Samuel did. He called it Underground Impresarios, and the Deviants would be the band to represent its first and only recording. To this end the Deviants virtually had free reign over the making of the album. Nigel would have some say in the making of the record — he was shelling out for it after all — but by and large the band was involved in all stages of the album's creation, from start to finish. If Mick was suspicious about the motives of the more unscrupulous rock'n'roll entrepreneurs of the time, he had fewer reservations about Nigel: "My own fantasies were being indulged, so let him have his."

The myth surrounding *Ptooff!* owes much to its creation as it does to its musical content. Taking its title from a sound effect in a Marvel comic strip, Mick says of the inspiration behind its name: "As far as I remember, it was from Dr Strange, maybe the arrival of the dread Dormamu. *Ptooff!* was in the original frame that started the whole thing. But as onomatopoeia it sounded more silly than dramatic and that suited us."

Armed with a "silly" title, and arguably just a modicum of talent, the Deviants set about the task of re-writing the traditional convention of making a record. The underground had managed to produce and distribute its own newspapers and magazines, so why not a record? Why not utilise the same distribution networks already used by the likes of *IT, Oz,* and psychedelic poster makers Osiris Visions? They eschewed the usual contractual obligations to a record company, dispensed with the established

distribution channels employed by the music industry, and sold the record via mail order adverts in the underground press and through head shops.

Not only that, they bypassed the means of traditional packaging. Aided and abetted by a number of friends and acquaintances, the band set about packing the record themselves in their own makeshift factory on the ground floor of the new *IT* offices in Covent Garden. There was a sense of camaraderie in that people took turns rolling joints and going out for beers and sandwiches. Legend has it that the folding and wrapping of the elaborate sleeve was conducted by a small army of street freaks, who were paid in speed to keep them working throughout the night.

Nigel Samuel had done his homework and calculated that, despite its size, it was more cost effective to produce a poster sized cover than a standard LP sleeve. The band had also utilised the talents of an underground artist called Pete Broxton to design the cover. Pete, alternatively known as Kipps, was an old art school buddy of Miles, and also worked for *IT.* Mick can't remember much about him, but says: "I liked his work, and that was enough to get him started on the art." The result was an explosive pop art fold out sleeve in the style of Roy Lichenstein, and it measured a whopping twenty four by thirty four inches. Doubling up as a stylish trippy poster, it is no wonder that the album sleeve became the perfect accoutrement to many a discerning freak's pad. (Ironically, it is the regular single-sleeved re-released 1970 version of *Ptooff!* on Decca that is more sought after by collectors today.)

Having secured the financial, as well as practical support of Nigel Samuel, the next step was to enlist a production team, and make the record and sell it. Mick already had Jack Henry Moore in mind as a creative collaborator, and Steve Sparkes as a producer cum publicist. Jack was renowned for his avantgarde inclinations and had apparently studied with John Cage. He was also a creative wizard in sound and lighting techniques, and had his own sound equipment set up and ready for use in the Arts Lab in Drury Lane. This would prove handy "for psychedelic pre-production," as Mick puts it, and the band could use the Lab's basement cinema for rehearsals. Steve was working for Joe Boyd's Witchseason production and management company, but found himself allied to the Deviants. He says: "I was working with the Deviants. I was also working with Joe Boyd as well

— opposite ends of the musical spectrum, the Incredible String Band to the Deviants was quite a jump!" Not surprisingly Steve's involvement with the Deviants didn't go down too well with Boyd. "He didn't really think that my promotion of the Deviants was a good thing," adds Steve.

By the time the band decamped to Sound Techniques studio in Chelsea, their ideas on record production were moving away from those of Nigel's. The Deviants recruited their own advisers whilst Nigel, perhaps not wanting to throw caution to the wind entirely, installed Jonathan Weber, Victor Gamm and John Pantry as producer and engineers respectively.

Not to be deterred by Nigel's insistence on house producers, Mick enthusiastically threw himself into learning the production process. Although Deviants' recruit Steve Sparkes had designs on the main production job, he also provided the occasional backing vocal, and his role extended yet further when he later became the Deviants' publicist. Over the next year and a half, Steve Sparkes worked tirelessly for the band, juggling his Deviants duties with his Witchseason commitments.

The recording process was an important learning curve. Of the band members, only Sid and Russell had any previous experience of recording in a studio, and only minimal experience at that. The assistance and encouragement provided by the appointed producer and engineers was a real boost of confidence to the relatively inexperienced Deviants. Mick says that the production team of Jonathan Weber, Jack and Steve surpassed themselves in the circumstances, and he picked up the basics very quickly himself, skills he would later put to good use as a producer in his own right.

If Mick came to accept Weber, the outsider, Steve is less gracious: "He was a complete wally, we used to sidetrack him as much as we could and do it ourselves 'cos he didn't really understand rock'n'roll,' or, probably, for that matter, what [the Deviants] were attempting to create. I mean, we were a bit far out in what we were doing."

The combination of Jack Henry Moore's experimental techniques and Mick's creative ideas, ensured that *Ptooff!* was never going to be a straightforward rock'n'roll record. A pre-production process that involved Jack hooking up two tape recorders, set ten feet apart, and using loops, whilst running a continuous tape, led to some pretty bizarre results. Mick

recalls in his autobiography: “We repeated, we echoed, we pillaged industrial sounds and primitive percussion, and even attempted phoney phone calls. By using the trick of the two machines and one tape, patched to an outside phone line, it was possible to call someone and have them talking to a delayed echo of their own voice.”

These telephone calls were made at the expense of a number of underground and avant-garde luminaries, some of whom were less than amused to find themselves the butt of the Deviants’ experimental tomfoolery. Yoko Ono however seemed to relish the telephone prank, and played along with it, wholeheartedly endorsing the use of the tape for the LP Unfortunately, circumstances dictated there wasn’t a context in which to use the final Yoko tape.

The Deviants used the same four-track technology that their mainstream counterculture counterparts, the Beatles, had used to record *Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band.* The Beatles had carte blanche over studio time and spent seven hundred hours on *Sgt Pepper.* The Deviants did not and could not, despite Nigel Samuel having all the money in the world and owning half of London. Mick says: “All the Deviants had was a worryingly incalculable timeframe that would end arbitrarily the day that Nigel looked at his meter and blew his stack.”

Consensus among various band members suggests that the recording sessions for *Ptooff!* lasted about a month, with mixing and post production taking another two to three months. Sid remembers these sessions as being very often chaotic and ad hoc. “Stuff was made up as we went along,” he says, “and a lot of pre-rehearsed and previously written material was thrown out of the window. All in all it was a blast, and for me, exciting and very interesting to watch it all come together. The whole process was fascinating really.”

Although Sid’s memory of producer Jonathan Weber is somewhat sketchy, he was impressed by the engineer Victor Gamm: “He was professional, obviously knew his way around a desk, and always had a solution for any problem. We often worked most of the day, and sometimes well into the night, and he never seemed to get tired.”

If there were any obvious differences between the house producers and the band's own team, they were overcome, or put aside long enough to produce a somewhat disparate collection of songs as derivative as they were pioneering. Drawing on a hotchpotch of influences, the songs ranged from the fairly straightforward, driven by Sid's blues guitar riffing (I'm Coming Home and Charlie), through Cord Rees's mawkish folky, hippy drippy compositions (Child Of The Sky and Bun), to experimental meister-creations (Nothing Man, Garbage and Deviation Street).

Of the blues style numbers, Charlie is listenable and appears innocuous enough, but is memorable in that it refers to "cop killing" — a particularly controversial issue in England following the slaying of three policemen by underworld villain Harry Roberts and his gang in 1966.

I'm Coming Home is a different kettle of blues altogether, and showcases Sid's blistering fuzz guitar work. Its riff would later be recycled on David Bowie's chart hit, and paean to Iggy Pop, Jean Jeanie. The rest of the tracks on *Ptooff!* can roughly be divided into two categories, experimental sound collages and acoustic ballads, and have sharply polarised opinion ever since. Music journalist Richie Unterberger concluded a chapter on the Deviants in his book *Unknown Legends of Rock'n'Roll* by saying the softer numbers on the album "are melodic psychedelic meditations that add to the diversity of the record considerably." Mick himself intimates that the band shouldn't have gone anywhere near them.

Although the experimental numbers are generally regarded as classics in their own right, Steve Sparkes once said that *Ptooff!* was the worst album ever produced, a statement he stands by today. ("I meant it!") However, he's not so dismissive of the significance of *Ptooff!* "I think we invented sampling," he says, "and Nothing Man may have been one of the Deviants' finest hours. In terms of experimental music, that was pretty advanced."

Jack Henry Moore and Mick Farren shared the songwriting credits on Nothing Man. Set to a cataclysmic musical arrangement, the song is evocative of the cut and paste experimentation of William Burroughs. It climaxes in a crescendo of high frequency feedback effects and oscillations and is typified by Russell's relentless percussion and Jack Henry Moore's sonic collages that careen in and out to devastating effect. Lyrically, Nothing Man is an indictment of a system that churns out and moulds

people into compliant automatons. In other words, the bourgeois and proletariat reactionaries who typify “straight society.”

Next in the canon of experimental masterpieces is Garbage. Again it draws on diverse influences, and in parts Bo Diddley riffs, which would be a recurrent theme throughout Farren’s output over the next few years (culminating with a cover of Mona, on *Mona, the Carnivorous Circus,* in 1970). After the initial opening mantra of *“We got garbage,”* comes the sound of protracted retching and vomiting (a vinyl first perhaps?), followed by the line: *“Garbage can make you feel so large, put two cars in your garage.”* This may appear throwaway but is in actuality part of a wider satire on a burgeoning consumer society. Juxtaposed against Mick’s diatribe against consumerism, Jenny Ashworth breathlessly repeats, *“garbage, garbage, garbage, garbage,”* over and over until Sid’s clanging chords open the final onslaught that is delivered in equal measures of fuzz and wah-wah. It is as dangerous as anything the Stooges would do and arguably a true case of parallel evolution.

The LP’s finale is Deviation Street. It appears to be unstructured chaos, as cluttered as it is disjointed, but, paradoxically, it is for this reason that it works. From an opening chord sequence that is not dissimilar to Wild Thing by the Troggs, through its Zappaesque spoken dialogues and alternating fuzz guitar and rock’n’roll riffing (Mona again!), to the explosive guitar finale, Deviation Street is an aural bombardment. The track is comprised of seemingly random references to the CIA and hippy conspiracy theories, and has a send up of a typical lascivious male come-on ritual towards women, as well as a satire on the hippy scene itself in its recreation of an underground club replete with spoof dialogue. Perhaps the latter is directed towards the UFO? On any given night the club may have had hippies trying to hustle their way in on the door, hippies marvelling at the lightshow, and bovver from skinheads. Deviation Street goes so far as to name check legendary UFO characters (such as Manfred, the German acid dealer), while Sid soars with a Hendrix style guitar solo. As this particular segment of the song abruptly ends, a sitar comes in and plays along to Farren impersonating a blissed out hippy alluding to enlightenment by waffling on about, *“Grooving on the spiritual meaning of the patterns on my wall.”* Sid’s reworked Wild Thing riff reappears, along with the sound of

screaming teeny boppers and Stuka dive bombers screaming from speaker to speaker, until the song climaxes in a brief flurry of brass and saxophone, which in turn marks the end of the album.

Parts of *Ptooff!* are breathtaking. With its allusions to social injustice, war, bigotry, consumerism and paranoia, it is as pertinently anti-establishment as anything else at the time. On its release, John Peel was inspired to write in his column for *IT* (June 14-27, 1968): "I've listened several times to the Deviants LP and it really is quite good. Some of it is excellent in fact, and I think you should try and hear it soon. It has all been developed through the Underground which, to date, has been very unproductive, although filled with bubbling ideas."

In the following edition of *IT* one anonymous reviewer wrote: "This LP should make the major record companies sit up. One could safely say it is THE release of JULY. Not only does it contain some 'Very Fine' and well produced tracks like I'm Coming Home, Child Of The Moon [sic], and Deviation Street, but also has a cover specially designed by Kipps for using as a wall poster. Who needs Cannabis when they own a copy of *Ptooff!?"*

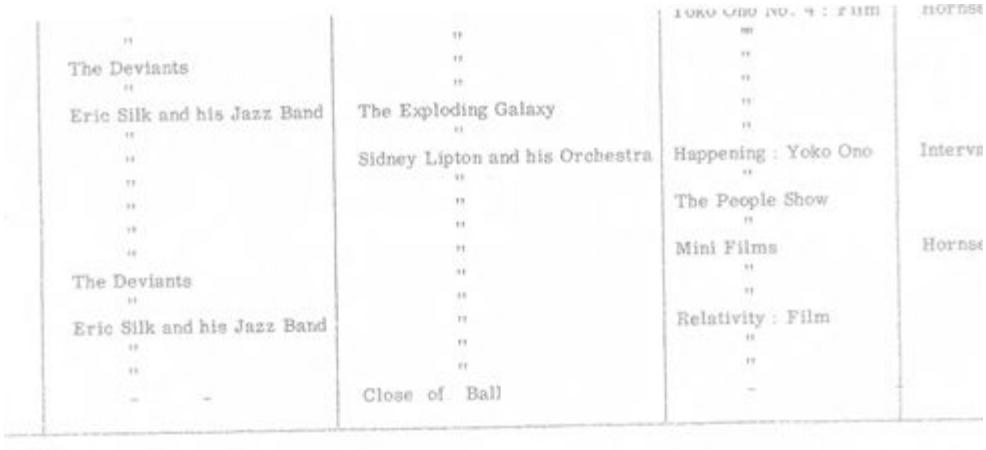
Although the making of *Ptooff!* proceeded relatively smoothly, it was not entirely without incident. The freshly recruited Cord Rees on bass had machinations on being the bandleader and singer, covertly expressing his intentions to Nigel Samuel whilst convincing him that Mick couldn't sing. Consequently, Samuel summoned Mick to his office to tell him his voice wasn't up to scratch and that a session singer should take care of lead vocals. Mick would be first to admit that he hasn't got a conventional singing voice. Halfway through an album was not the time to eject a lead singer however, and Mick convinced Samuel that it was too late to lose him from the band. It was hardly likely the rest of the band would have gone along with it anyway.

Russell Hunter believes Cord Rees was engaged in manipulating Nigel, and says that Rees tried "at one point to involve Sandy and me . . . the thought that Cord Rees could even begin to replace [Mick] is laughable, and we ignored him." Mick was not pleased with Rees's evident chicanery, but to avoid low morale decided against sacking him until the recording had been finished. His bass, vocal and guitar parts had already been laid down anyway. But before Mick got round to sacking him, Rees left of his own

accord. (Rees span an elaborate yarn about his wife dying during a miscarriage. This was patently untrue as Sandy spotted her a few days later in Oxford Street.)

Cord Rees supplied *Ptooff!* with the twee Child Of The Sky and the instrumental paean to his wife, Bun. Both compositions are now largely denigrated by most of those involved, and Mick told Ritchie Unterberger in 1996 that they were, "A compromise with Cord Rees, who fancied himself doing that sort of thing. I always felt they were kind of a sop to the worst kind of Donovan fey-hippy Incredible String Band mentality out there in the audience, and we shouldn't have even been approaching it." Mick went so far as to eradicate these tracks from a 1993 Alive Records re-release of *Ptooff!* re-titled *Garbage.* (The somewhat pedestrian Charlie was omitted, too.)

The Deviants never played Child Of The Sky or Bun live, and Russell states the songs were "strictly filler to keep [Rees] quiet. I shed no tears at his departure." Of the album itself, Sid is ambivalent: "It was years ahead of its time I think, and in some parts brilliant. They are, however, fairly small parts, and, with the benefit of hindsight, about half of it would be better binned."



This page: Social Deviants at rehearsals, circa 1967 (l-r) Russell Hunter, Mick Farren, Sid Bishop, Alex Stowell and his portable lightshow (Photograph by David Redon, courtesy of Jenny Ashworth)
That page: Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Ball programme schedule, November 10, 1967 (Courtesy of Sid Bishop)

part two

Enter the Firm

Ptooff! is an astute piece of social commentary. With references to "gooks," "kikes," "niggers" and "commie rats," it addressed contemporary issues, such as the Vietnam War and the Cold War. It also alluded to the perennial issue of bigotry, of racial and ideological intolerance, consumerism, street violence and war.

Musically the album is flawed. Despite the somewhat controversial reference a song like Charlie makes to cop killing, the lightweight blues excursion is not entirely at home amongst the more experimental numbers, whilst Child Of The Sky and Bun are definitely of their time, not ahead of it. Mick says: "We could easily have done more stuff like Deviation Street, but we wouldn't have had the time and money to record and mix it, especially on four-track. Thus the combination of [Rees's] pressuring to do his compositions and the threat of running out of budget forced the compromise." One can only wonder the kind of album *Ptooff!* may have been, had not time, compromise and financial constraints dictated its production.

Time has been kind to *Ptooff!* however. In these somewhat revisionist days it qualifies as a bonafide cult underground classic. It is an acquired taste, and painful listening for some people, and though Steve Sparkes claims it to be "the worst record in the history of man," he also regards it as "the first independent album." *Ptooff!* he says, "was made entirely outside the record production establishment."

Mick brought in Ian Sippen and Pete Shertser to help handle distribution, the main faces in a gang of mods from the East End of London and Ilford area of Essex known as The Firm. Sometimes jokingly referred to as the Jewish Mafia, and although not a violent group in comparison with the Highbury Lads or a number of the other gangs of the era, they had a reputation for raising mayhem in the main clubs of London. Indeed, it was their relentless hi-jinx at UFO that brought Sippen and Shertser to the attention of Mick Farren and led to their employment as bouncers. Mick describes some of their antics at UFO in his autobiography: "They spiked a number of people, including the hapless John Peel, attacked the more disorientated hippies with water pistols and, on one memorable night, let off an assortment of fireworks right on the dancefloor." Mick suggested that it would be better to employ Shertser and Sippen than to ban them, as a ban would only be treated as a challenge.

Talking to Jonathon Green in 1987, Shertser said:

> *We caused so much trouble that in the end Miles, Mick and Joe got us together and said, 'Look: it's easier to stop you causing trouble, why don't we employ you to be bouncers on the door to stop trouble getting in. And that way you've got the best of both worlds.' It wasn't so much security, more* a *protection racket as far as they were concerned, but if they gave us a few bob then we couldn't get up to chicanery. So that's what we did, unless they paid us enough. These mods would turn up: 'You can't come in here, your hair's too short.' 'Butyou're supposed to be all for freedom and things.' 'Yeah, but we know your sort.' 'How about* a *fiver?' 'Right. You're in.' And when there was trouble we'd say 'Get Mick!' and poor Mick [Farren] would come down. He was good at the verbals. We

did have a go *occasionally, but when it got really out of hand — the real evil characters, the skinheads — we all disappeared.*

Although certainly more than capable of looking after themselves, the Firm adhered to the credo of music, drugs, style, mayhem and money rather than mindless aggro. According to Mick Farren: "They were a lot of ex-mods who were into style first, and being mods, ingested massive amounts of drugs, dropping acid like pills, and then became extremely weird, but frequently made a lot of money." Having already befriended Shertser and Sippen at UFO, and turning their talents for raising mayhem to the club's own advantage, Mick realised the potential in utilising the business acumen of these two Jewish wise guys. In *Days In The Life,* Shertser remembers it like this:

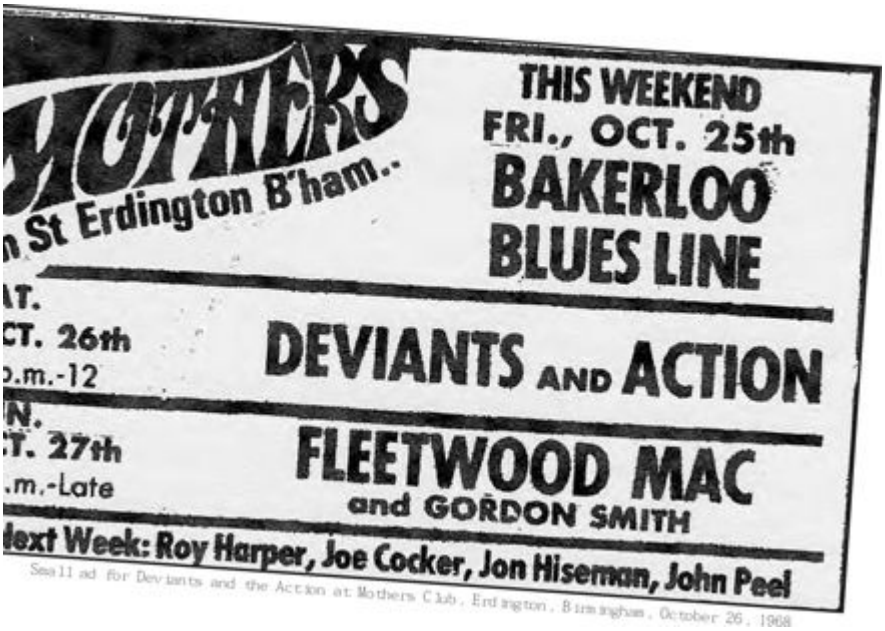
Micky Farren told me he was going to start an independent record label to put out the Deviants' album, Ptooff! *He'd found an investor — Nigel Samuel. So he's got involved and he's done the thing. They were above* IT. *And in my summer vacation from college he said, 'Why don't you come and sell it. You know all about records, you must be able to sort the record business out.' I knew nothing. Then he said, 'The commission would be twenty per cent.' For twenty per cent I knew! Samuel had this putz running it — Nick Cornfield. Long blond hair, very nice accent, suitcase, dressing like* a *smart hippy. If ever* a guy *looked out of place it was him. I thought 'I've seen some mugs in my time, but this guy takes the cake.' I could tell from the off: here is* a *punter,* a *prize A-1 punter. He's telling me they have* a *million quid to fuck around with: that's the wrong thing to start me off. An expense chitty walked in before I got the job! So there it is: boom! I've had* a go *and I'm selling them. I don't know what I'm doing but I'm learning, finding out, punting, one thing and another and all of* a *sudden I'm selling records. Thinking, 'This is* a *good game.' I'm getting twenty per cent of the entire turnover. Real money in those days.*

Good money indeed! Down the years there have been rumblings from some of those involved with the making of *Ptooff!* about the lack of forthcoming royalties. Steve Sparkes for one says: "I didn't get any money from it, well I'm *not* getting any money from it." Nothing was put down in a contract. Sparkes says that at the time, "We weren't all that bothered . . . nobody ever imagined . . . well I never imagined that I'd live this long for a start, and I certainly didn't imagine that fucking *Ptooff!* would still be selling!"

The initial intention had been to keep all means of production and distribution within a loose coterie of friends and associates of the band, but Sherter and Sippen took control of the whole project. They persuaded Nigel Samuel to sell them the rights to the record in perpetuity. Sippen died some years ago, but the issue of rights in perpetuity continued to be a bone of contention between Mick and Shertser until recently.

The interest generated by this small, self contained enterprise within the London underground scene was enough to attract Seymour Stein, boss of then fledgling Sire Records label — albeit with a little encouragement from Peter Shertser and Ian Sippen. The pair had persuaded Nigel Samuel to fly them out to New York with a view to getting a record deal in the United States for *Ptooff!* They were successful in achieving this and Sire released *Ptooff!* in the US at about the same time that *Disposable,* the band's second album, was released in the UK.

Despite the fact that the Underground Impresarios label, set up by Nigel Samuel, produced only a one off in *Ptooff!,* an idea had been realised and throughout the 1970s others picked up the gauntlet and set up their own record labels. (Most notable amongst them was Stiff, more of which later.) *Ptooff!* has come to embody the anything goes, do-it-yourself proclivities of punk, and even if its significance has not always been recognised over the years, its ramifications continue to this day.



Small ad for Deviants and the Action at Mothers Club, Erdington, Birmingham, October 26, 1968

'...be sure to wear some flowers in your hair...' - Legalise Pot Rally, Hyde Park, London, 1967. Sandy (middle) with girlfriend (left) and Chris Rowley (right) (Photograph courtesy of Duncan Sanderson)

part three

One Bass or Two

There were personnel changes once again by the time *Ptooff!* was released. The band had acquired a van driver and a head roadie, who was to play no small part in the story of the Deviants and Pink Fairies. And they had acquired not one but two keyboard players in Dennis Hughes and Tony Ferguson; the former was a friend of Russell, the latter a friend of Sandy. Their sound was further augmented by implementing two bass guitars. Having learned to play bass and contributing backing vocals on *Ptooff!* as well as uncredited bass parts, it was only natural that Sandy should make the transition from sometime contributor to full time bassist.

Sandy was born Duncan Sanderson on December 31, 1948, in Carlisle, Cumbria, in the northern extremities of England. His father was serving in the RAF, and the peripatetic nature of families of the Armed Forces meant Sandy moved around quite a bit in his early years. From the age of eighteen months until he was five years old he lived in Dayton, Ohio, in the United States. During this period he remembers watching a lot of television ("Superman and the Everlys everyday"). When he was five his father was transferred to Northwood in England and Sandy ended up at prep school in Cheshire. It was in Northwood that the young Sandy met Nick Lowe, whose father was also in the RAF. (Lowe would go on to work with the Pink Fairies in one of their later incarnations during a spell at Stiff Records.) By the time he reached adolescence the Sanderson family had moved again, this time to Andover in Hampshire.

He became more interested in music and, as most kids did at the time, liked the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, as well as keyboard driven artists, such as Georgie Fame and Booker T & The MGs.

The Troggs were the big local Andover band in the mid sixties, but the first band he saw was the Graham Bond Organisation, another keyboard heavyweight, when he was boarding at Brentwood School in Essex. As his teens progressed, he began to develop an interest in Bert Jansch, Davy Graham and other folk acts, turning on to Bob Dylan by the time he left school.

Sandy moved to London in January 1967, where he started work in advertising for a company in Berkeley Square. He hooked up with an old school pal, Chris Rowley, who took him to UFO, and was impressed by

resident band Pink Floyd, and Keith West and Tomorrow, who Twink was drumming with at the time.

Discovering the scene around UFO, a new way of life opened to Sandy and it wouldn't be long before he quit the advertising house to immerse himself in the underground. (The advertising company was relocating to Maidenhead anyway, just down the road from his parents in Medmenham.)

It was at UFO that Sandy met Mick Farren and, like Russell before him, also started working there. When Sandy wasn't getting by on gigs at UFO he was involved in other countercultural ventures. One of these was an exhibition at the Lisson Gallery for Yoko Ono. "I think it was called Half a Dream," says Sandy.

Although additional bassists and drummers would come and go, the rhythm section pairing of Sandy and Russell would prove to be the most enduring relationship in the Deviants and Pink Fairies.

Sandy became involved with the Deviants soon after Mick and Joy moved with him to Shaftesbury Avenue. Recording sessions for *Ptooff!* began around this time. Initially Sandy just shared backing vocal duties, or "handclaps and noises" as the sleeve credits have it, with Russell's girlfriend at the time, Jenny Ashworth. Of how he came to be bassist, Sandy has this to say: "I wanted to be a guitarist, but given the chance of being in a band 'Go on gimme the one with four strings, it's gotta be easier!' Actually it isn't, it's a whole different ball game. I never studied the bass, never thought about the bass, but that's how it came to be, really."

Sandy became the Deviants' second bassist at a time when they wanted to experiment with two bass players. Michael McDonnell, or Mac as he was known, was another new recruit, and would share bass duties and sometimes second guitar with Sandy. As the other bassist he would augment a "thundering" bass sound, an idea for which Mick Farren has since taken the blame.

"On full amplification," says Farren in his autobiography, "they could replicate an atonal B52 in a power dive and were far from pleasant."

Mac had originally been a friend of Shertser and Sippen, and was introduced to the band via their connections at UFO. It is here that the Ilford connection grows stronger as Mac's own friendship with yet another ex-

mod from Ilford would bring to the band one of the most important elements of their story, a gentleman by the name of David “Boss” Goodman.

part four

Boss and the Big Pig

David Goodman — he wouldn't be called Boss until his teens— was born in north Middlesex on September 13, 1948, to Hilda and Harry Goodman. When Boss was six his father, who worked for P&O, died from leukaemia, and to compound the trauma, the family had to vacate their company premises and move into a damp basement in Brunswick Park, Camberwell, south east London.

To provide for the family, P&O put the bereaved children through boarding school, and the infant Boss was packed off to the first of a series of boarding schools that he hints were effectively orphanages for children of deceased Royal Merchant Navy employees, particularly officers. Boss didn't enjoy being wrenched away from his mother just months after his father died. Boarding school was a terrifying experience, and he grew to hate it. There were sadistic matrons who would punish anybody caught talking after lights out, with "Six on each cheek with a fucking great hairbrush." Not forgetting the frequent canings on the bare backside by the headmaster on Monday mornings at ten to nine, "the dangerous time." Boss goes on to say: "The place was full of perverts, it really was. But you didn't know it at the time, you're only seven years old and you accept it as the norm." The school was closed down whilst Boss was there. Not being quite old enough to go to the senior school, Boss was forced to attend an interim school, the Royal Wanstead in Snaresbrook, E11. Again it was horrible.

By the time he reached the Royal Merchant Navy Senior School, Boss was "by far and away, by a million miles the poorest kid in the whole school." Although it pretty much followed the same kind of regime, senior school was more bearable for Boss. It adhered to the more traditional initiation rites of boarding schools, like being "bumped," but here the pupils had their own contemporary initiations. " 'Elvis Presleyfied,' as we called it," says Boss. "We used to make people stand on top of the wardrobe and sing Elvis Presley songs, and the minute they stopped they were pelted with slippers, and God knows what! We'd throw lockers at them, or anything, until they started singing Elvis Presley songs. So, I found I was in the presence of senior boys, and we always used to have a radio in our houseroom, and they said 'Write down the Top Ten on Radio Luxembourg for me,' and all that stuff, so I started enjoying Radio Luxembourg."

In his penultimate year of school, Boss and some of his schoolmates formed a skiffle band called the Trekkers. “I had about three different tin drums that we bashed to make half a tune,” Boss says, “and we sang Lost John by Lonnie Donegan. I loved that song! And then the following year we turned it into an R&B group, ’cos some young kid in another House had a little drum kit, so he used to lend me it. Not that I was ever a good drummer by any means. And my mate Chuck Stokes was the singer, and Bobby Green was the guitar player, and a guy called Glynn Lloyd Roberts, and somebody playing a tea chest bass.”

The R&B group was called Hobo Flats after a Jimmy Smith song, and they performed Bow Street Runner by the Bow Street Runners, who had won a *Ready Steady Go* talent contest on TV Boss would get up from behind the drums and sing Maybelline or No Money Down by Chuck Berry. “It was all good fun. We even played the end of term school concert.”

Boss had started to get into trouble at school. One time he was hauled up in front of the headmaster for supplying “pep pills” to other pupils, but it transpired that he and his friend Phil de Newman had actually covered aspirins with ink and tricked another pupil into believing they were French Blues, an amphetamine tablet popular at the time. Boss was let off with a severe reprimand, but the seeds of wild youth had been sown and Boss began to immerse himself in the mod subculture.

Boss made the most of half term holidays by heading straight to Soho. He and a friend, Oghie Tighe, would spend hours planning the trips. One of their favourite haunts was the legendary Two-I’s coffee bar. “That’s where I first heard Prince Buster’s Madness on the jukebox upstairs,” recalls Boss. “And Oh Carolina by the Folk Brothers, and those two records really stick in my mind.” Boss and his friends were listening now to early Motown and old blues records, and would spend hours tracking them down. Boss says: “Lightning Hopkins, and Howlin’ Wolf . . . he’s my big blues hero. I just love that guy; he’s got the greatest voice I’ve ever heard in my life. Muddy Waters obviously, there’s loads of it, it’s endless and then you’d keep abreast of what was happening at the time. You take the Who and Small Faces for example — the Beatles were obviously an example of progression — and then you go along with it as well, appreciating all the underflow music.”

There would be no sixth form for Boss. He was informed in no uncertain terms by the headmaster that he was *"persona non grata"* at the school because of his bad influence on the younger pupils. In order to help support his mother, who had been living with a violent builder and was now in a bedsit, Boss got himself a job at Goodmayes Mental Hospital as a kitchen porter. He lasted half a day before returning from the pub after his lunch break, kicking over a bucket of water and walking out.

Next was a job as a shelf stacker at a supermarket in Ilford, where he was soon promoted to warehouse manager. The extra cash enabled Boss to visit the Flamingo Club on a more regular basis than he did at boarding school, and he saw many of his favourite bands there, including: "Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames, Wilson Pickett, Zoot Money's Big Roll Band, John Mayall's Bluesbreakers and Eric Clapton, the Animals. When you were a mod you had to go there — the all-nighters — the Flamingo was the place; it was the dingiest little, most fabulous, greatest club you could ever wanna go to." The Flamingo catered for those with a predilection for jazz, blues and black soul. Further up the road, at the Marquee, a burgeoning white R&B scene was forming. Of the Marquee, Boss recalled for

Days In The Life, that it

> *was fucking fantastic. The Tuesday night residency was the one to go to. I saw the Yardbirds with Eric Clapton there, and all that sort of stuff, but when I first saw the Who, I'd never seen anything like it, I couldn't imagine that people could do such things. I went straight out and broke a window. I was that impressed. It broke down so many barriers for me, just that one evening of seeing the Who. The set was so fucking violent and the music so heady, it hit you in the head as well as the guts, it did things to you.*

Boss was now foreman at a Safeway supermarket in Ilford, having worked himself up from the bottom of the ladder again. He attributes his progress to a particularly potent type of amphetamine capsule called black bombers. In *Days In The Life,* he says: "Because I was taking black bombers, which my doctor was prescribing for losing weight, I was filling those shelves a lot faster than anybody else. I had the gift of the gab and

was generally a lot sharper than anyone else. I became night crew foreman, because Safeway filled their shops at night — revolutionary at the time." Safeway was also where Boss got himself a criminal record, following a food scam in which he was implicated. He was arrested, fined £20 and sacked, and entered what he now calls his "lost period." He was being drawn inexorably into the Deviants circle.

"I first saw Sparky when I was a mod in Ilford," says Boss. "Someone pointed him out to me at Ilford Palais one time: 'There's that guy Steve Sparkes. He's Ilford's top mod!' Ha ha ha ha, and so years later I meet him at Shaftesbury Avenue and he's our manager."

Boss moved into a basement in 32 Goodmayes Lane, Ilford, which in time would come to be known as "the Big Pig" to the Deviants, local hippy drug takers and the local drugs squad. Inspired by a tabloid newspaper story on a "Heaven and Hell" drug called LSD, Boss and his housemate and old school friend, Mick Dale, sought out some to try for themselves. "It was the *News of the World* that turned me onto acid," Boss says. Suitably impressed by the drug, Boss set about taking acid on a regular basis. Initially he scored acid and hashish from Gerry Burroughs. When Gerry Burroughs moved into Goodmayes Lane, the basement flat quickly became the focal point for Boss's coterie of friends known as "the Gang," which included the likes of John Cox, Michael "Mac" McDonnell, Kevin Buckley and Tony Wigens. Wigens was a friend of Mac and he too moved into one of the rooms at Goodmayes Lane. The Gang was loosely based on another infamous Ilford gang, the Firm, and, being its leader, Boss was known as Boss. Boss probably first met Pete Shertser of the Firm sometime in 1966, via their mutual interest in taking drugs. They would end up working with the Deviants in different capacities over the coming months.

The Gang had started to forge closer links with the Firm, and were hanging out and dealing with some of them. An LSD production line was in operation at "the Big Pig," where crystal acid was mixed with distilled water and dripped in single trips onto sugar cubes or blotting paper. Steve Sparkes recounted to Jonathon Green: "You couldn't touch anything in his [Boss's] house 'cos you'd trip. You'd open the fridge at this house and there'd be bottles and bottles of acid. There'd be more acid in the fridge than food and Boss likes his food. You had to be really careful what you

touched — you'd be sitting there and you'd touch furniture and you'd get contact." Boss, Gerry Burroughs and Mac were making so much money from dealing they bought themselves a Jaguar. Gerry moved out of "the Big Pig" into the city to further pursue a career in drugs, and Mick Dale, Boss's old school pal, became known as "the Commander," because of the long army coat he wore and the jeep that he drove.

A typical weekend night might involve various members of the Gang dropping a trip at 32 Goodmayes Lane and cramming themselves into either Mac's Ford Popular, Mick Dale's Jeep, or Tony Wigens's recently acquired ex-bread van, and heading to the West End. Middle Earth allnighters were particularly popular as Boss and the Gang were making the transition from pilled up mods to fully psychedelicised pranksters. Aided by a satchel of props that Boss would carry, some hapless hippy was usually the recipient of one of their practical jokes!

Mac had already joined the Deviants. As with Russell, Sandy, Steve Sparkes and Peter Shertser before him, his association with the band came through frequenting UFO. Boss did not become familiar with the Deviants until Spring 1968 when he and Tony Wigens were invited to a Deviants rehearsal at the Middle Earth club. The Deviants would have to tour extensively now that they had an album; they saw potential in the walk-through Commer van that Tony Wigens drove, otherwise known as the "bread van," and recruited the two lads on the spot, thereby completing the Deviants' Ilford Connection. For Boss it was the start of an enduring working relationship and lifelong friendship with various members of the Deviants and Pink Fairies.

Boss remembers it like this: "So, Mac joins this group, and then one day comes round and says, 'My group's going on the road — would Tony like to hire us the van and be the roadie, and Boss would you like to be the humper?' So we thought about it and said the least we could do was come down and have a look."

The Deviants hired the Middle Earth Club in Covent Garden for rehearsals when it wasn't booked. Being old mods, Boss and Tony were more than surprised to see the motley crew with whom their old gang member Mac had got himself involved on bass. Says Boss: "We used to see the Who and the Small Faces, and really good bands, and we walk in and

they're onstage already rehearsing, and we looked at each other and thought 'Christ!, wow, what a noise!' And we sat and in the middle of the club, and we just couldn't believe our eyes really."

The experience made an impression on Boss, and not simply because there were two bass players: "Mac, who, bless his heart, wasn't a great bass player, and Sandy who's a lot better musician than Mac ever was, but he looked really good."And the diminutive Sid Bishop: a "little geezer with a Lewis leather jacket on and a cherry red Gibson." The only person who Boss thought was really any good as a musician at the time was Russell. "But you couldn't see his face because of this enormous hair," recalls Boss. "The hair was down over the drums!" Then there was Mick Farren:

> *From the bottom up, he's got his Acme cowboy boots on, he's got his leather trousers on, he's got his yellow Ben Sherman shirt on open to the waist and an enormous great studded belt, and hair that's gone completely fucking Hendrix like . . . and then some. And he just looked . . . you know? . . . this huge broken nose, and he can't sing* a *note in tune, and it was the most fearsome thing the pair of us had ever seen in our lives, and we looked at each other and went, 'Maaan! What have we let ourselves in for? Do you think we should split?' Tony goes, 'I think we should get the fuck out of here, man, let's just go home to Ilford and smoke some dope!'*

The pair didn't split. They hung around out of respect, and possibly concern, for their pal Mac until he introduced them to Mick, who according to Boss turned out to be "the nicest guy on the planet."

Boss's early employment for the Deviants was not without its setbacks. After his first night working for the band he was busted on his return to "the Big Pig." It was the night of Saturday, May 11, 1968. The Deviants were supporting Pink Floyd at Falmer House Courtyard at the University of Sussex in Brighton — incidentally one of Harvey Goldsmith's first forays into promoting rock music. After the gig Boss broke the gear down and packed the van, and the Deviants entourage drove back to London. They stopped off for the night at a flat in Norland Square belonging to a guy

called Waldo, all except for Boss, who returned to Ilford. He had barely twenty minutes sleep when, at around 8.30am, the local drugs squad came crashing through the doors of 32 Goodmayes Lane. The "Big Pig" had finally been stuck.

There was a fairly safe stash place in the old Aga cooker, but housemate Micky Dale had broken the cardinal rule of not stashing the gear before going to bed. The police officers came traipsing into the bedroom with their haul of cannabis resin. Recalls Boss: "A copper comes in with a fucking jam jar full of quid deals, five bob deals, ten bob deals, and I went, 'Oh no!' And then another copper comes in, all of them just left sitting in the kitchen overnight, a big biscuit tin with, like, ounces, half ounces, quarter ounces — three quarters of a pound of hash." Boss and Micky Dale were detained in Ashford Remand Centre for a week before entering a guilty plea for possession and being let out with a year's probation. The pair of them celebrated their release by taking some acid.

Fortunately for Boss his job with the Deviants was waiting for him when he returned. The task of promoting *Ptooff!* was resumed, as was preparing material for a new LP The Deviants were into a routine of playing regular fixtures at London venues, such as the Middle Earth club, and finally carving a niche in the London underground music scene. Aware of the hardships that faced bands in London, as well as the rest of the country, Mick Farren continued to espouse the need for cooperation within the wider underground community in order to circumvent the grip of the corporate record companies. A number of enterprises that he and Steve Sparkes had been considering thus came to the fore.

part one

Mean and Filthy and the Wipeout Gang

For a time the Deviants were handled by Joe Boyd's Witchseason agency. This was down to Steve Sparkes' connections, and not Boyd's love of the band, of which there was little evidence. Up until the release of *Ptooff!,* in the middle of 1968, the band was handled by John Lyon of NEMS.

Farren realised the importance of using the services of a traditional agent, but was equally an advocate of doing things for himself. Early in 1968 after the latest bout of upheavals in the Deviants personnel, the band, or more specifically Mick Farren and Steve Sparkes, created two new organisations. Of Mean & Filthy and the Wipeout Gang, today Steve Sparkes says: "It was Micky and me doing all sorts of stuff, you know? Posters and stuff like that. Micky and I always used to be asked who was 'Mean' and who was 'Filthy,' but the initials MF say it all really. Mick Farren was the real motivation behind it." An uncharacteristically modest Mick blames it on Barry Miles: "He turned me on to inventing and crediting bizarre companies for various projects."

Mick had come from an advertising background, even if it was only time spent at college, and Steve was a photographer. It was only natural

they should combine their talents to establish a graphics wing of Mean & Filthy. Indeed, their poster enterprise might arguably be responsible for one of the most enduring poster images of all time, one that continues to grace student bedsit walls: that of the now iconic photograph of Che Guevara. Although the popular story is that an Italian by the name of Giangacomo Feltrinelli adapted Alberto Korda's legendary photograph of Che and turned it into the iconic poster image, Steve Sparkes claims otherwise:

> *Micky found the original photograph in* a *Cuban magazine. So, we decided to do* a *poster of it. I did the photographic part and did that first tonal drop out and reduced it to black and white. Micky then did* a *khaki coloured block all the way round it and then I took it to Danny Halperin, who was the graphic designer for Joe Boyd at Osiris Visions — the psychedelic poster makers. Danny didn't like that khaki bit, so he just printed up that first black and white image, which, if you ever find an original one, you'll find is produced by M&F productions. That poster then went to the Milan Bianalle Exhibition where it was picked up, and everyone thinks it was the Italians who came up with that, but it wasn't — it was us.*

Mick Farren confirms that he and Steve Sparkes took the Korda photograph and made a poster out of it, but adds: "Sparkes blagged a copy from the Cuban Embassy." If Farren and Sparkes never got rich off the back of it, the original photographer, Alberto Korda, who died in 2001, certainly didn't either.

Poster production was just one wing of Mean & Filthy. More importantly it served as a means of self management and promotion, as well as engendering a community spirit within the wider underground. An article from *IT* in June 1968, entitled "Guerilla Pop," gives an insight on where Farren and Sparkes were coming from with regards to Mean & Filthy. In the article Mick says: "The aim of the Wipeout Gang, even now provide a turned-on army, music instead of bullets, happenings instead of battles. A rock group on a rooftop can be as effective as a machine gun. Mean & Filthy was the organisation to make this possible."

Explaining how the organisation had produced posters of heroes of the revolution (Guevara, Dylan, Hendrix, Eddie Cochran) and was managing the Deviants, Farren stated that it was now ready to move into phase two. This next phase was to champion unsigned underground groups and provide a collective means of protecting their interests from the clutches of the corporate record companies and promoters. He advocated using music as a means of getting the message across. “Putting pop groups into the streets, into parks throughout this summer is the first move,” wrote Farren. “Hundreds of dancers in Drury Lane on Saturday afternoon is more effective than a dozen protest marches.”

A network of communication and cooperation was required if the underground was to take control of its own music.

> *We need help in the following ways. In London we need information on sites. If you know of a vacant lot, a car park, a recreation ground, a square: with somebody who can provide a sources of electricity. Out of London we need the same information, but also we need commercial bookings to help cover the cost of transport etc. For instance, the free concert we did for the rebel students at Essex cost nearly twenty quid which is more than one member of the group at present earns in* a *week. The ideal situation is to play the local club on* a *Saturday night and then give* a *free guerrilla concert the next day. If you are in another group and you want to create similar scenes to get in touch.*

The Deviants themselves were playing more and more free gigs, and at open air demonstrations — all without a record deal, and all with the prospect of taking the Deviants on the road to promote *Ptooff!* and raise the band’s profile.

Mick’s espousal of “Guerrilla Pop” was as relevant for the Deviants as it was for any struggling underground band of the day.

MIDDLE EARTH
presents on
SATURDAY, JULY 6 — 10.30 - DAWN
A ONE-NIGHT SUMMER CELEBRATION
at THE NEW ROUNDHOUSE
starring, from U.S.A.
THE DEVIANTS
THE GUN
THE BYRDS
THE IRON VOLCANO
IZZY THE PUSH
THE WRITING ON THE WALL • LIGHTS BY THE GREAT BRITISH LIGHT SHOW
JD YOUR ROVING DJ • NON-STOP FILMS
Free Bus, Shuttle Covent Garden
— Roundhouse will be in operation through the night
SUNDAY, JULY 7 — SPEAKERS' CORNER, 2 p.m.
LEGALISED POP RALLY '68
MIDDLE EARTH SUPPORTS RELEASE
RELEASE SUPPORTS OZ
RELEASE SUPPORTS MIDDLE EARTH
OZ SUPPORTS MIDDLE EARTH
OZ SUPPORTS RELEASE
MIDDLE EARTH SUPPORTS OZ.
PLUS I.T.
Tickets are on sale in advance from: MIDDLE EARTH, 43 King Street, Covent Garden
Tel. 240 1327
Small ad for the Deviants supporting the Byrds at Middle Earth at the Roundhouse, July 6, 1968

part two

Motorpsycho Nitemare

The continuous treadmill of touring can inevitably blur into one monotonous routine and the situation was no different for the Deviants, despite some particularly memorable shows throughout 1968 and early 1969.

In Britain the university circuit was an essential part of the development of any band, but with prevalent student unrest throughout 1968 — not just in Britain, but throughout the rest of the world — the Deviants could also be found playing student demonstrations and sit-ins. One of Sid Bishop's most memorable gigs was an open- air gig in Trafalgar Square.

Ostensibly a student demonstration against the Vietnam War, the event attracted an estimated crowd of around 35,000, the largest the Deviants had yet played to. (The crowd was daunting enough to "absolutely petrify" Action guitarist Martin Stone, according to Sid.) The Deviants rose to the occasion, and in a series of photographs Farren can be seen posturing to a

sea of faces across Trafalgar Square, pencil thin, ever the confident front man, the epitome of radical biker chic dressed in leather jacket, cut-off denims, jeans and motorcycle boots.

Steve Sparkes was forever experimenting with ways for the Deviants to make an explosive impact, even if this meant putting on their own crude, if not particularly safe, pyrotechnic shows. The band had nearly burnt down a hall in Colchester after letting off outdoor fireworks on the stage. In Trafalgar Square, they created their own micro reconstruction of the Vietnam War itself. Steve Sparkes had the idea of making homemade fireworks that were strategically placed around the front of the stage and the plinth of Nelson's Column. Russell Hunter remembers that the explosives were concocted in the back of the van on the way to the gig: "We had these iron pipes, and we were busy mixing up sodium chlorate and weed killer and hammering it into the pipes, which as you know is an extremely dangerous and unstable thing to do." Sparkes ignited the explosives, to the detriment of the band's own safety as well as that of a section of the crowd. Russell continues:

> *We were supposed to set off bombs along the stage in front of us, but we'd got the mixture wrong — mercifully — otherwise there would have been shrapnel flying everywhere. The first one didn't actually blow up, just burnt ferociously. So we then decided just to empty the stuff over the stage, so there was this sort of flash fire that went across the front of the stage and singed all our eyebrows. It would have been horrific if it had actually gone off.*

No one was seriously injured, but the Deviants did nearly find themselves under arrest for contravening several bylaws.

Early in the Summer of 1968, the Deviants played a student sit-in at Essex University that arose from a protest during a lecture on germ warfare. Enraged at the apparently arbitrary stance taken by the University's registrar, a large number of students took to the halls of residence and barricaded themselves in, declaring Essex a free university. The band had already been booked to play by the students' union, and were asked to come and play anyway as an act of solidarity. Accounts vary as to how they were

able to get past the authorities and into the besieged students. Mick Farren says it was because of the pre-existing contract, whilst Russell Hunter believes that the students somehow sneaked them in. Regardless of their means of access the band played for free, along with the Chris McGregor Group. During the evening's proceedings, between sets, the University senate made a statement, which by no means met the students' demand.

> *IT* reported that: "The Deviants then did an hour set and after Sid Bishop's guitar wrecking finale a few of the Anarchist faction were inspired to break into the restaurant stores and distribute free food to everyone present." The "Anarchist faction" actually comprised band members. The students hadn't taken the matter of food into account when they barricaded themselves in. By the time the Deviants turned up they had barely eaten for two days, despite a fully stocked cold-room beyond the refectory. Sid recalls: "The students hadn't eaten for a day or two, so me and a couple of other band members kicked in the door to the kitchens, and broke into the refrigerated food store, thus 'liberating' some food so everybody could eat. I remember Russ Hunter taking home a whole side of bacon and dozens of cartons of yoghurt, many of which got thrown out of the van window at passing motorists on the way home."

In addition to a regular booking at Middle Earth in London, the band were playing numerous gigs in London and surrounding areas. They were also crossing the country's A-roads and motorways to play places as diverse as Sheerness, Aberystwyth, Tadcaster, Bridlington, Leeds, Coventry and Newcastle. Mothers Club in Erdington, Birmingham was a particular provincial favourite for the Deviants and Sid remembers it somewhat fondly as having a wonderful atmosphere. Jenny Ashworth adds: "I remember lots of occasions driving back at night down the M1 absolutely wrecked."

At the City Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, just four days before their now legendary gig with Led Zeppelin in Exeter, the Deviants shared a bill with the Pretty Things, Aynsley Dunbar Retaliation and Pink Floyd. The power was turned off at 10.30pm and caused the audience to go berserk. In an

article for *Mojo* (October 1999), Mick recalled that some of these industrial outposts provided the main body of the band's support:

> *What would turn out to be our primary constituency [were] the disaffected young in the grey industrial towns of Harold Wilson's England, either still humping on the factory floor or attempting to live the street life on the sales of quid deals and National Assistance. They were the ones who seemed to recognise Deviant anger as the real deal and very close to their own, sussing that, even if we couldn't play for shit in the accepted sense, our aspirations to total assault and suicidal consumption were the genuine article and that made us good for at least an anarchic giggle on* a *Saturday night. These car factory, disaffected, psychedelic yobboes were the ones who went out of their way to make us welcome when we pulled into their local club or the hall next to the boozer. They were the ones who slipped us a half-dozen blues, a couple of mandies or a lump of Paki black.*

The industrial wastelands of the Midlands and north of England were inclined to be more supportive of the Deviants than some of the country's rural backwaters, which were downright hostile to them. The most famous example is the occasion the Deviants supported a band that was playing one of its first shows as Led Zeppelin. Confusion exists as to where this particular gig took place. Mick Farren, Boss Goodman and Sid Bishop are of the opinion that it was Exeter Town Hall in Devon. Russell Hunter in *Days In The Life* claims it was the Bristol Boxing Club. Martin Turner of Exeter band Empty Vessels, later to become Wishbone Ash, confirms the venue was indeed Exeter City Hall, and the gig took place on December 20, just two days before Led Zeppelin embarked on their first tour of the United States. "Led Zep were billed as 'Lead Zeppelin' with 'formerly Yardbirds' underneath," recalls Turner. He goes on to say:

> *Soft Machine actually never showed. The Social Deviants and ourselves, the Empty Vessels. I am not sure on the running order, but I know that on this occasion we had a guy called Les Adie, lighting man for Principal Edwards Magic Theatre, who came on*

stage during one of our tunes and hand painted one of Principal Edward's girl singers, a *lady called Ruth who was wearing* a *bikini and who was an immensely 'dirty' looking girl. It made* a *hell of* a *mess on the stage and was* a *bit of* a *'happening'* — a *lot of people thinking that we were Soft Machine.*

It isn't the scantily clad Ruth and her paint display for which the show is now best remembered by the Deviants. It was the scene of a particularly hostile reception, made up largely of belligerent squaddies from a nearby army camp, young farmers and other assorted rustic types bent on causing physical harm to the longhaired townies. Things got worse when Mick Farren minced across the stage and kicked over the pint pots that had been strategically placed by the squaddies and farmboys to better separate their girlfriends from the Deviants.

Sid remembers vividly that somebody was stabbed in the back in front of the stage and somebody else had an eye gouged out in the toilets. "One of the soldiers threw a beer mug, one of those big pint dimpled things, at Mick Farren during our part of the show," recalls Sid. "It missed Mick, bounced off the front of Russell's bass drum and rolled towards me. I was furious, just saw red, grabbed it and threw it with as much force as I could right back at this guy's head." The intended target dodged the beer mug, and the actual victim was an innocent friend of Martin Turner. Consequently, Charlie, the singer in a local band, was taken to hospital and had stitches.

Several other people were also injured by flying splinters. The bumpkins and squaddies threatened to kill the band and a full scale riot ensued, in which the enraged yokel hordes attempted to assail the stage. Fortunately for the band, a couple of Californian Hell's Angels, guests of Mick's on a trip to England, were in attendance and together with the ever redoubtable Boss Goodman and Tony Wigens, both wielding microphone stands, they kept the irate rustics at bay long enough for the band to make good their escape. Says Sid of Boss, Tony, and the two Hell's Angels: "It's to them we almost certainly owe our lives. I do not exaggerate!"

Mick Farren was fairly shaken up and in need of "a puffer — asthma treatment device," recalls Martin Turner of the Empty Vessels. "The rest of the band decided to go out on the streets and try and find these trouble

makers and sort them out." Before they could, the police turned up and escorted them all out of town to prevent any further trouble. The hapless hippy who had borne the brunt of Sid's misaimed glass earlier in the evening was there to see them go. He was swathed in bandages, but apparently bore no malice for the incident and apologised for all the trouble that evening.

On their way back to London, the band was pulled over twice by the police. Jimmy Page's Les Paul had been stolen from the dressing room whilst Led Zeppelin were doing a soundcheck. Martin Turner recalls Page asking whether he had seen the guitar. "He was clearly very upset about it."

The Deviants' and their van drew interest from the police at the best of times. On the alert for stolen musical instruments with the fearsome Led Zeppelin manager Peter Grant on their case — influential even at this early stage of the Zeppelin ascendancy — the police had little choice but to target them.

But it was probably not the police that opened fire. The band were overtaken on the way home that night and shot at. Unable to remember the exact location, and at the time assuming the sound of gunfire to be the vehicle backfiring, a closer inspection of the van on their return home revealed a bullet hole in the body work.

Fortunately, life on the road was not always as interesting as the shooting incident. For the most part it was simply boring: a small van crammed with young men, and often their girlfriends, drunk, high on drugs, or maybe hungover or coming down off drugs, sometimes a combination of both.

The Deviants, like any band, were not immune to the monotony that the road inevitably afforded, and devised ways to counter the boredom when not too stoned or drunk. Mimicking the hippies that attended shows was one way. "Various of us would imitate the individual in question," recalls Mick Farren, "but, after a hundred miles Russell and Sandy would be doing a whole 'raised on *The Goon Show,'* pre-Python dialogue." The stoned dialogue between a bunch of hippies at UFO in Deviation Street on the album *Ptooff!* developed out of one of these conversations.

Another way of alleviating boredom would be to recite favourite songs. Boss has recalled how he and Mick used to sing Bob Dylan's Motorpsycho Nitemare: "It used to completely blow Russell and Sandy's brain out, 'How comes you two wankers know all that?' But we used to sing it anyway, and we'd be driving along drunk, or whatever, singing all this nonsense just to keep ourselves amused in this horrible van, you know?"

It is from a slightly later period in the Deviants career that Boss began to entertain the rest of the band on the road with a song called Why Does A Red Cow? Boss first heard the song as a child in a park off Camberwell High Street, where a clown used to entertain children during the school holidays, ". . . and he sang this stupid song about 'Why does a red cow give white milk when it only eats green grass, that's the burning question, let's have your suggestion, I don't know, you don't know, don't you feel an ass, why does a red cow. blah blah blah blah,' and for some unknown fucking reason it stuck in my stupid addled brain." He goes on to say: "Miles and miles, and hours and hours of motorway, and one day I probably came out with Why Does A Red Cow and they all thought it was highly amusing." It was funny enough for Boss to sometimes be called up onto the stage during the later, Pink Fairies years, and perform it, much to his embarrassment.

Boss also bore the brunt of another game the band devised to counteract tedium. Mick says: "We developed an entire parody of *Tommy* designed to insult Boss that started 'It's a pig, Mrs Goodman, it's a pig! A pig! A pig!' You get very bored travelling the roads."

Mick Farren looks out over the crowd at Trafalgar Square, circa 1968. (reproduced from Search and Destroy, 1977)

On July 6, 1968, at a Middle Earth special billed as One-Night Summer Celebration At The New Roundhouse, the Deviants supported the Byrds. Other acts in the line up included the Gun, the Iron Volcano, and Izzy The Push. A number of incidents again conspired against the Deviants' performance. It started with a certain London gangster, who had his fingers in a number of pies — rent collecting and protection rackets figuring in his

range of dubious enterprises — and it involves the evolution of the UFO club.

The UFO opened at the Blarney Club on Tottenham Court Road at the end of 1966, and eventually moved to the Roundhouse in Chalk Farm. With these larger premises came higher financial costs of rent, security, lighting and staff. UFO's closure was announced in *IT,* dated October 27- November 11, 1967. Financial difficulties were cited as the main reason behind the indefinite suspension of UFO's activities, but there was more to it than that. The UFO was a central hub in the London underground network and, prior to its closure, was instrumental in funding underground interests, such as *IT* and Release. Financially it was a lucrative source of income to the underground, a fact that didn't go unnoticed by racketeers on the make, who saw potential in exploiting the burgeoning, not to mention commercial, "flower power" movement.

According to Steve Sparkes, the aforementioned gangster had been showing an active interest in UFO, and was "Trying to muscle in, 'cos there was plenty of cash about. So, we were having the odd problem." As a result of one of these problems, the gangster was none too kindly disposed towards Steve. "I remember outside the Shaftesbury Avenue apartment when he came up and he said he was going to kill me." Following this, Steve took to arming himself with a gun for protection. Steve was carrying the gun some months later at the Deviants show with the Byrds at the Middle Earth. He says: "The Byrds turned up in the afternoon, and I was setting up the stage with the Deviants to do their soundcheck, and David Crosby turned to someone in the Middle Earth organisation and said, 'Unless that man takes that gun from under his arm we are not playing.'"

The Byrds very nearly did not play that evening, but in the end it was not over objections to the gun carried by Steve Sparkes. Mick recalls that John Cox, ex-member of Boss's Gang and Deviants associate, had given them a bunch of mandies that they thought were speed, and they could hardly walk by showtime.

The Deviants were booked to play an anti-censorship benefit at the Royal Festival Hall in London on a bill that included such luminaries as Willie Rushton and Sir Laurence Olivier. Sid even ended up sharing a dressing room with actress Billie Whitelaw. Organised by *Private Eye*

magazine, the event was something of a pre-cursor to the Amnesty International *Secret Policeman's Ball's* of some years later. That same night the Deviants had a gig at London University. Sid remembers: "We did one set there [London University], tore down the gear, rushed from Gower Street to the South Bank, set up again to do one number, repacked all the stuff to go back to Gower Street to do the last set there. Absolute mayhem."

The band were received with more hostility than applause by the Royal Festival Hall crowd, which appeared to be at odds with the spirit of the evening's main cause of freedom of speech and anti-censorship — a fact that angered compere George Melly, who was quick to chastise the more unruly elements of the intolerant crowd. *The New Statesman* had this to say about the evening:

> *It was all very quiet,* a *bit smug, rather boring . . . Until* a *marvellous pop group called the Deviants appeared. They have that curiously fragile undernourished look which is lately fashionable; thin, pointed faces under great bushes of hair. (Is it over-permed to get that effect? Back-combing would never hold up to the way they toss their heads and generally throw themselves about.) Anyway, being within* a *few yards of* a pop *group was a new experience for me, and an absolutely exhilarating one. I see now why teenagers scream; the noise is quite extraordinary, it really does make ones bones shake. It was nice to be on the right side of the generation gap, in spirit at least, for once: after they'd finished, there was* a *lot of booing from the older members of the audience, whose tolerance slipped the minute they found something offensive. Compere George Melly explained that 'freedom' included the right to have, as he put it, 'shaven armpits and sweaty chests.' The younger part of the audience recognised this instantly as patronising, and started booing too. 'Will you shut up?' shouted Melly, losing his cool. 'If you don't shut up this minute, I'll kick you up your crab-ridden arses.' Thank you, and goodnight.*

Such hostility was grist to the mill for the Deviants. They had faced far more hostile audiences than this before, and would certainly do so again. Despite playing only one number at the *Private Eye* event (their single, You

Gotta Hold On from the *Disposable* album) it is hardly surprising it overshadows the two full sets the Deviants played at the London University gig that same night, which went relatively smoothly.

With regard to this succession of gigs, night after night, Sid Bishop says he can recite a list of some of the places the Deviants played, but "very little stands out, just a lot of scrambled memories, many of which now blend together." He does remember one gig at Aberystwyth University, however, or rather the aftermath, which he recalls thus:

> *We were invited back to some hippy's flat for an after gig party. We were often invited, or perhaps tempted might be a better word, into such situations post gig, as there was always plenty of free dope on offer, and often plenty of other free things as well! Russell, as I recall, had given me some Seconal on this occasion. I went into the kitchen to take it with some water, started to walk back into the living room and collapsed on the living room floor after covering about five yards. It was like being hit on the back of the head with a large rubber mallet.*

Although drugs had always figured quite highly as recreational pastimes for the Deviants, the drug scene in general had begun to change. Drug use was largely restricted to amphetamine pills, and the psychedelic staples of cannabis and LSD, but by 1968 other drugs like barbiturates—Seconal, for example — and the particularly strong hypnotic sedative Mandrax, or "mandies," as street slang of the day had it, were becoming popular. Heroin was also beginning to creep onto the scene. But perhaps more common was an explosion in the use of a particularly potent form of amphetamine called Methedrine.

Methylamphetamine chloride, or Methedrine, was first prepared in 1919 by Ogata in Japan, and, right up until its eventual withdrawal from the UK market, its main legitimate use had been for resuscitation in surgical emergencies. This was a very different beast altogether from the type of speed favoured by mods in the early 1960s. As Boss points out: "People reverted back to drinking and taking speed. Methedrine came along, and it

was like. Ow! If Methedrine had been there as a problem thing with all the mods I think a lot of us would be dead probably."

Although the ampoules were designed for intravenous clinical use, it was more convenient, not to mention preferable to recreational users, to snap open an ampoule of Methedrine and pour its contents into a can of Coca-Cola and then drink it. For those who were more adventurous, and wanted to experience the full impact of the Methedrine rush there was always the option to inject. A generic form of disposable needle and syringe that could be used to inject the drug would be the inspiration for the title of the band's second LP *Disposable* (as opposed to waggish detractors who claim the title to be an apt description of the LP itself). It was not unknown for certain members of the Deviants' entourage to favour the injectable method of taking Methedrine. Whatever the method used, the long term effects of prolonged use could often be detrimental to physical and mental health.

Mick says: "The band was divided into two factions: those who injected their meth, sometimes chased by a shot of vitamin B12 for the sake of their health, and the ones who popped the glass top off the ampoule and poured it into a Pepsi-Cola . . ." Mick and Steve Sparks fell into the latter category, both declaring an aversion to needles. Despite the heavy duty nature of Methedrine, Steve Sparkes certainly favoured it over the more acceptable choice of hippy drug: LSD. Talking to Jonathon Green in 1987, Sparkes said:

> *I was taking acid, and the wonderful, glorious Methedrine. I have to admit that I always thought that acid was pretty boring. I was essentially a speed freak and acid was just like* a *different sort of speed as far as I was concerned. I never got the glorious hallucinations that I read about. I was always greatly disappointed in acid . . . I don't know where the Methedrine came from but it came in its little medical boxes and it was cheap and plentiful.*

Methedrine had become relatively easy to get hold of, its source in no small part being the "junkie doctors," of which Lady Isabella Frankau and Dr John Petro were two of the most notorious. The Deviants had their own

"junkie doctor," who went by the name of Dr Brody. After being evicted from his Shaftesbury Avenue consulting rooms, Dr Brody, according to Mick, was "reduced to sitting in Boots, the all-night chemist in Piccadilly, writing prescriptions for anyone who could pay." In a previously unpublished 1987 interview for *Days In The Life*, Russell Hunter told Jonathon Green:

> *I took drugs to find out really — you had to see what happened. I was also heavily into Methedrine, which I used to get from Dr Brody in Shaftesbury Avenue — 'You are mad. You will kill yourself! Give me the money. Thank you.' — I also met Dr Petro, the junkie doctor. He was completely mad and he was sampling his own wares. I remember him sitting in Micky's flat in Shaftesbury Avenue just writing Methedrine scripts on an old Smith's notepad, giving them out to anybody who'd give him* a *tenner. I don't think Micky was actually there . . . he was very down on Petro and wouldn't have liked it. He took* a *lot of speed but not much else. Micky had quite a moral thing about those guys.*

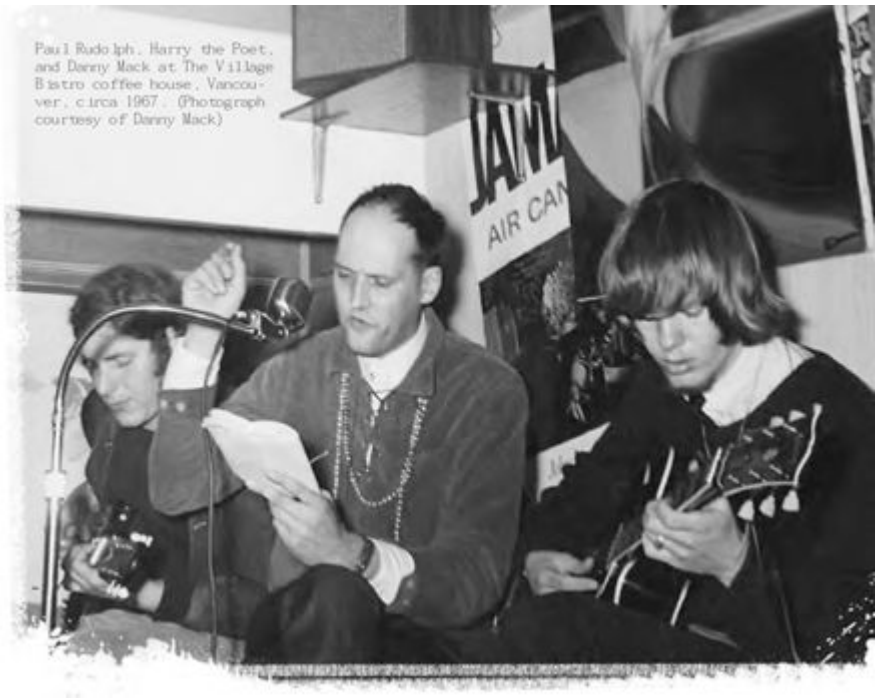
Jenny Ashworth, Russell's girlfriend and sometime Deviants backing singer describes the insidious nature and proliferation of Methedrine:

> *Ah, yes. . . Methedrine. The reason my teeth all fell out! And yes,* Disposable *happened when all that was at its peak . . . We were all at it, myself included, and yes, it was excessive. I don't think we realised how serious it was. We were young and thought we would live forever. We were all pretty strung out. It's ultimately* a *horrible drug. Messes with your brain leading to massive paranoia and* a *kind of weird spaced out madness, which you got so used to, it felt normal.*

It was evident that the Methedrine epidemic was getting out of control, and by October of 1968 the Ministry of Health reached an agreement with the drug manufacturers to restrict supplies of injectable Methedrine to hospitals. This they implemented fairly rapidly, leaving a potentially dangerous void in its place. Russell Hunter has said, "the government

stepped in and stopped all that overnight, literally. They just said 'That's it. After six o'clock tonight, no more Methedrine.' It was very lucky really."

In suddenly imposing these restrictions in one fell swoop, the government shifted the parameters to unwittingly open up a wider field of potential abuse, and possibly exacerbated the perceived drug problem. On the one hand, because of the act, many casual Methedrine users, like the majority of the Deviants, were spared their physical health as well as their sanity. On the other hand, those with more serious needle fixations, who were more deeply immersed in the drug subculture, subsequently switched to injecting other drugs, such as heroin or barbiturates.



Paul Rudolph, Harry the Poet, and Danny Mack at The Village Bistro coffee house, Vancouver, circa 1967. (Photograph courtesy of Danny Mack)

part three

The Methedrine Monster

Having gigged extensively throughout the spring and summer of 1968 to promote *Ptooff*!, the band entered Morgan Studios in September to record their second LP, *Disposable*. By now Farren and Sparkes, under the guise of Mean & Filthy, had secured the Deviants a record deal with newly

established independent record label, Stable, supposedly owned by Simon Stable. Mick implies that, in hindsight, the Stable deal was something of a mistake, and without going into too much detail says, "I was stupidly simple. Simon Stable was a club DJ, mainly at the Country Club in Belsize Park, and worked in the record store Musicland on Portobello. He was fronting a psychedelic record label for the guys that ran the Trojan blue beat label. They also owned the Flamingo nightclub of Georgie Fame fame. A combo of West End and JA mobsters. Heavy!"

Disposable was knocked together in little over three weeks, and is nowhere near as experimental as the band's debut album. It could have been produced by a different group altogether, and in some respects it was: Sandy and Mac had replaced Cord Rees on bass, and Tony Ferguson and Dennis Hughes shared keyboard duties. Although the compositions were largely much more straightforward than those on *Ptooff!* they certainly had much more of a scuzzy edge than a great deal of what else was around at that time, and could hardly be classified as mainstream rock. Indeed, in November 1968, *Record Mirror* journalist Derek Boltwood commented, "Like garbage the sound of the Deviants is rough and raw and not the sort of thing you serve for tea in the front room on Sunday afternoon."

The recording of *Disposable* may have given the band a brief respite from the rigours of the road, but its production time from the start of recording in September to its release in December was considerably shorter than that of *Ptooff!* No sooner had the band recorded the LP they were out on the road again to promote both the still fairly recently released *Ptooff!,* and to showcase some of the new songs on *Disposable.* Because of the escalating drug use, and the band's increasingly frenetic schedule of recording and touring, the circumstances surrounding the creation of *Disposable* are almost as legendary as those surrounding the making of *Ptooff!,* but for completely different reasons.

Methedrine was being used almost daily by nearly everyone involved, and with a constant cycle of uppers, counteracted by downers, it was not long before amphetamine psychosis and the side effects of other drugs began to affect certain members of the band and its entourage. For some members injecting had become the norm when taking drugs, and not just

Methedrine either. Heroin was on the scene in a bigger way, and even at this early stage the Deviants was not without its dabblers.

Steve Sparkes arranged for a photoshoot to take place in an old car breaker's yard that he had discovered near Littlehampton on the south coast of England. All of the band, and a number of their friends and other acquaintances made the trip to the coast in the group's legendary black transit van early one Sunday morning. Before they had made it out of London they were stopped and questioned by the police. Steve Sparkes remembers it like this:

> *It was 6.30 in the morning, and we all meet up in Ladbroke Grove, and jump into the back of the van, and we had* a *jukebox . . . So there's* a *van with a jukebox, and the Deviants and Boss, and everybody's girlfriend . . . and every drug known to mankind in the back of this van . . . So we pull out into Ladbroke Grove and the police stop us, and one guy goes up to Tony Wigens to get his licence or whatever, and the other copper goes round the back and opens the back door to the van. He looked in, and looked at everybody in the back of the van, then he closed the back of the van, and said to his mate, 'Come on let's go. I don't want to do this!'*

On this occasion, the bizarre sight of so many freaks in one confined place freaked the poor copper out.

By the time they reached the coast and parked up it was apparent that the increasingly erratic keyboard player Dennis Hughes had taken a heroin overdose, and all attempts to resuscitate him proved futile. Sid now says, "We thought he was dead. He certainly appeared to be, and checks on his pulse, heartbeat and breathing all proved negative. Even the old mirror under the nose trick failed to find any sign of life." It was at this point they assumed Hughes to be dead. Not wanting to waste their photo opportunity, however, having crawled out of bed at some ungodly time on a Sunday morning and made the journey down to the south coast, the rest of the entourage went and had their photos taken; they would worry about what to do with the hapless Hughes afterwards. It was even mooted that they carry

the body down to a remote beach, where they hoped he would be found and his death would be attributed to the accidental overdose that it was, thus deflecting any unwanted police attention from the rest of the band.

Completing the shoot, the band trudged back to the van only to be greeted with a volley of abuse from the supposedly dead Hughes, who had come round in a somewhat confused state of mind. The entourage then had to re-adjourn in order to shoot the photo session all over again, this time with Hughes! The final result was used on the gatefold cover of *Disposable* and shows the Deviants and their retinue in all their freaky glory.

In hindsight, the story is darkly humorous, but the reality was that Hughes had become a very troubled individual, a situation exacerbated by the huge amounts of drugs he was taking, such as LSD, STF, Methedrine and heroin, not to mention heavy drinking. He would leave the band soon after the release of *Disposable,* and apparently committed suicide by jumping from a castle in Wales. The Deviants' other keyboard player, and Sandy's old friend from school, Tony Ferguson, would meet a similar fate in that he also took his own life: After leaving the Deviants, Ferguson suffered periodic bouts of depression, and became a Hari Krishna before drowning in a bizarre attempt to swim between the two piers on Brighton seafront, having been hospitalised following an attempt to kill himself.

Disposable was a conscious stab at producing a more commercial effort. Steve Sparkes says: "We were trying to make some money. we were trying to move towards competence and less anger." In came a more hard edged straightforward rock sound, which was favoured over the experimentation that the band indulged themselves in on *Ptooff!* Sid Bishop is given more of a free reign, and his trademark fuzz guitar comes prominently to the fore and is impressive throughout (although the throwaway guitar instrumental Sidney B. Goode is best left alone).

Steve Sparkes had booked the band into Morgan Studios in Neasden, London, where one of the resident engineers was Andy Johns, brother of the more famous producer and engineer Glyn Johns. On one memorable occasion, someone snapped an ampoule of Methedrine and spiked Andy Johns with it. In an interview with Trevor Jones (reprinted on the sleeve for the Deviants *Disposable* CD re-release in 1998), Russell recalls: "I remember one evening, Andy Johns was feeling tired and wanted to go

home and we said 'What! Here we go Andy, try some of this. you'll feel better!' I cracked an amp of it and poured it into a glass of milk. and I think we were there for about two days on the trot after that." This was not the only time Johns fell prey to the amphetamine fuelled Deviants. His coffee was subjected to the Methedrine treatment every time he showed signs of flagging, according to Mick. Not only did this put Johns on the same wavelength as the band to some degree, it also had the desired effect of obtaining extra studio time. "He didn't know what week it was, let alone what hour it was!," says Steve Sparkes.

On another occasion when the band were due to record a song called Let's Loot The Supermarket (perhaps owing more than a nod to Boss's previous existence as a supermarket manager, a position from which he was sacked for redistribution of food amongst local hippies), the band were about five days into what amounted to a marathon Methedrine binge, and Boss called up his dealer friend Gerry "The Man" Burroughs to enhance the day's proceedings with whatever herbs he had to offer at the time. Come the time to record the track, all involved had smoked themselves into a near senseless stupor and were hardly in any state to rehearse the song, let alone record a competent final version. But they did and the cut made it onto the LP "It's a brilliant recording," says Boss, "it's just fucking fantastic. I think it's the best thing the Deviants ever recorded."

Let's Loot The Supermarket wasn't even mentioned in an *IT* review of *Disposable* by Miles: "The Deviants are at their best when not imitating other groups. On this, their second album, it would be best to disregard a number of the tracks if you want to find out anything about the group. The album opens with Somewhere To Go which is Doors. There is also Slum Lord, which is not as the good as the Fugs." Miles provides a litany of groups that the Deviants sound like: "a Country Joe shout introduces Normality Jam. . . . Guaranteed To Bleed is Fairport Convention and You've Got To Hold On is an American group I've forgotten the name of." If Miles appeared to be somewhat indifferent he did give credit where he believed credit was due. He elevated Jamie's Song to what was evidently his favourite track on the album: "The words. are exceptional — this track is very original and to my mind best represents the Deviants. It is their own voice, a clear slow solo from Sid."

Felix Dennis was less charitable than Miles in the December 1968 edition of Oz: "[A]ll that should be at issue is whether the group have anything original or valid to offer in the thirteen tracks of pure British underground music that constitutes *Disposable*. Cuts like Sparrows And Wires, Normality Jam and Somewhere To Go, say they haven't. The lyrics are for the most part pretentious, artificial, clumsily metered and badly sung." Dennis added that Dick Heckstall-Smith was the only competent musician "within the nineteen assorted people credited as performing on the album." Harsh words indeed from the erstwhile underground magazine street vendor and *Oz* obscenity trial defendant.

However, both Dennis and Miles rated the glorious high powered cover version of the Rivingtons' Papa-Oo-Mow-Mow. Miles encapsulated it perfectly with this description: "a 1950s number which features the mighty Boss sounding like Frankie Lymon with little yellow butterflies fluttering from his mouth." The song was punningly retitled Papa-Oo-Mao-Mao after the Chinese Communist Chairman, so in vogue with budding left wing revolutionaries at the time. But this merely hinted at Farren's political inclinations.

Let's Loot The Supermarket, discordant shambles that it is, indicates where Farren was coming from, politically, but Fire In The City was a much more serious proposition, both musically and in terms of the political content of its lyrics. For the song, Mick recruited veteran jazz saxophonist Dick Heckstall-Smith, and Pete Brown of Battered Ornaments, also a respected trumpeter and Jack Bruce's early songwriting partner for Cream. With its funky jazz rock vibe, and lyrics like *"The world's gone* insane, *and the wind has changed, and who's to blame?,"* Fire In The City mirrors the social and political foment prevalent throughout Europe in 1968, as it does the continuing unrest in black ghettoes throughout a number of cities in the United States. Champions of the Civil Rights movement, Martin Luther King Jr., and Senator Robert Kennedy had both been assassinated that year, and the radical black power movement was now entering its ascendant, spearheaded by the militant Black Panther Party. Districts such as Watts in Los Angeles, and Detroit, went up in flames to the war cry of "burn baby burn." Richard Nixon was elected President, and the anti-war movement

began to pick up momentum as the war in Vietnam escalated. Turbulent times indeed!

Contemporary interviews with Mick Farren certainly highlight his own political awareness at that time, and he stresses that the Deviants were a political band. *Disc and Music Echo* ran an "Underground" special in its November 2 issue from 1968, and in an article called "Revolution — with guitars, not bullets," Mick is quoted as saying:

> *The underground is what it literally means —* a *resistance movement against the establishment. Like in France during the war, but today it's sneakier and less direct . . . The present underground uses widely different media to earlier ones — that's if you can call sub-machine guns* a *media. Violent revolution is not the answer because, basically, revolution means* a *change in people's attitudes and violence doesn't do that — it just gets rid of those with different attitudes to your own.*

The common thread throughout the article was revolution by means of music, "with electric guitars and harmonicas rather than bullets and bombs." Mick emphasised that "Pop music is the only large medium the underground has. And it's the only thing which this generation has grown up with and can totally identify with." But if Mick was eager to stress that the Deviants were a political band, others were not necessarily so inclined.

The musical side of being in a band was always more important to Sid Bishop than the politics. He enjoyed the spirit of communal rehearsal sessions in the early days in the East End, but he was never keen on the idea of living the communal life with the rest of the band when it was mooted at one stage. Besides, he was married with a baby daughter, and his wife was even less enamoured with the idea. Since the early days of the Social Deviants certain members of the band had always lived with one another, or in close proximity to each other, and now did so at Shaftesbury Avenue. "Truth be told," says Sid,

> *most of us didn't really get on that well on* a *personal level, and even musically, people were often pulling in different directions. The whole thing inevitably would have been a disaster, and*

certainly would have resulted in the band's early demise. The community thing is a *bit of* a *myth, I'm afraid. Just because we all assembled for a few photos, and looked like* a *load of hippies, and gave out* a *vibe of community spirit doesn't mean to say there actually was one.*

Whatever the relationship was, the exact circumstances surrounding Sid's departure are not entirely clear. Sensing his impending ejection, Sid himself says that he went before he was pushed, but Mick has suggested that he became a victim of the next round of Stalinist purges within the band, precipitated by tales of an amazing Jimi Hendrix style guitar player called Paul Rudolph.

Twink with early band the Strangers, circa 1964 (Photograph from NME, February 11, 1978)

part four

The Canadian Connection

Prior to the recording of *Disposable*, Jamie Mandelkau came into the Deviants' circle. It was not long after Mick and Joy Farren moved into the apartment on Shaftesbury Avenue. The couple had grown apart to the extent they now had separate rooms, and into Joy's came Jamie Mandelkau, whom

she met whilst working at the *IT* offices in Betterton Street. Jamie ensconced himself at Shaftesbury Avenue and shared the apartment with six cats and the rest of the Deviants' coterie of associates.

Jamie Mandelkau had something of a peripatetic childhood. He was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1948. Jamie's father had also been in the RAF: a tail gunner for Coastal Command. Following the war, he became a mechanic and road builder, which increasingly took him abroad, mainly to the Gold Coast in Ghana. The family eventually immigrated to a small town called Gibsons Landing, just north of Vancouver in British Columbia. (The town was popularised in a television series called *The Beachcombers* in the 1970s, but today Gibsons Landing is more renowned for a high quality grade of marijuana bud called "Gibsons Green," as well as being home to the Marijuana Party.) Jamie attended Elphinstone High School and was in the same class as Jim Rudolph, brother of future Deviant and Pink Fairies guitarist Paul Rudolph, who was in the year above. Jamie's ambition throughout highschool was to become a writer, his literary inspirations being Jack Kerouac, Neil Cassidy, Bill Burroughs, San Francisco poets Michael McClure, Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlingetti and thriller/crime writers such as Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett, Georges Simenon, Eric Ambler and Elmore Leonard. He and Jim Rudolph befriended the local logger poet, Pete Trower, now a Canadian literary treasure. Recalls Jamie: "We would hang out at his place drinking wine, listening to his poetry, jazz [and] blues records. Pete the Poet's influences were very much in the bohemian vein — Kerouac and Cassidy." Literature was Jamie's first love, but music was a close second.

At Elphinstone High, Jamie was the Social Secretary and responsible for booking bands for dances. He avidly watched television programmes like the *Dick Clark Dance Party,* like most teenagers, and saw the Beatles and the Stones on the *Ed Sullivan Show.* Unlike many teenagers, however, he actually saw the Beatles live three times.

It is a one hour ferry ride followed by a thirty mile drive from Gibsons Landing, but Jamie travelled the distance regularly in the mid sixties for the package tours of British and American bands that passed through Vancouver. He also patronised gigs that his close friend Paul Rudolph played. "Paul was always in one band or another, playing rock'n'roll," says

Jamie. “Usually we’d see him playing in the town hall at Roberts Creek, some twelve miles up the coast from Gibsons.”

By the age of sixteen, Jamie was living on his own and holding down part time jobs in order to graduate from high school. He moved to Vancouver in 1967, following his friend Paul Rudolph, who had moved there the previous year. The Vancouver music scene was very much influenced by the west coast Californian sound, and the two friends immersed themselves in it, going to shows by the likes of the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane and Janis Joplin and Big Brother and the Holding Company.

Whilst Paul Rudolph lived out his west coast fantasies in a number of local bands, Jamie was fulfilling his literary dreams by hanging out with poets and beatniks, going to avant-garde jazz jams in back rooms, and reading poetry in folk clubs. He travelled by bus to San Francisco where he hooked up with Emmett Grogan’s Diggers, and helped feed people in Golden Gate Park. It was in San Francisco that his poetry was first published, after getting to know staff at the offices of the underground newspaper, *The San Francisco Oracle.* He also got to know the Family Dog crowd and worked the cloakroom at Chet Helms’ Avalon Ballroom.

Jamie spent a year travelling between San Francisco and Vancouver, proving to be an inveterate hustler and funding himself by dealing in LSD. By mid 1968 he was living in the Kitsalino district of Vancouver with a group of friends, still dealing acid. It was here that the idea for a detective thriller series called Ace *Smith* came to fruition. Inspired by a television programme about the King’s Road in London, and the British music and fashion scene, Jamie set about sending manuscripts off to every publisher he could find in Britain.

The drug dealing had become problematic; his house was shot at and his partners beaten up and hospitalised when a major deal went wrong. So Jamie picked up sticks once again: “I decided on the spur of the moment the timing was right to split town. With cash and a British passport in hand, I went to the airport and got on the first flight to the UK, with a couple of manuscripts.” Ironically, it was on the King’s Road that Jamie was attacked. It was a gang from Glasgow, and Jamie was in the process of being robbed

when “Longhair” John Downie stepped out of a pub and came to his aid. The two became firm friends.

By the time he moved out of a Bed & Breakfast in Sloane’s Square to a flat in Warwick Road in Earl’s Court, Jamie was mixed up with a group of amphetamine and hashish dealers, and was back to his old ways. The Cafe des Artistes in Redford Gardens was a particularly favourite late night haunt. It was here that Jamie met a certain Lemmy, who was at the time playing in a band called Sam Gopal. Jamie was also hanging out in the offices of Apple Records under the pretext of being a “lyric writer.”

Mick Farren now feels that Russell, Sandy and even Boss had become obsessed with the idea that the Deviants could be a seriously viable musical proposition if they supplanted the perfectly competent guitar style of Sid Bishop with the talents of Paul Rudolph, about whom Jamie spoke highly and at length.

There was another reason why some members of the band had become disenchanted with Sid: he lived too far away. Sid was steadfast in his reluctance to move closer to the rest of the band, remaining in what was in effect an outpost of South London to be closer to his family. At the end of the evening after a gig, the journey home would involve a detour of an extra hour in order to drop Sid off. “Picking him up became a pain in the arse,” says Mick in *Anarchist,* “but dropping him off afterwards, when we only wanted to lie down and die, became the resented last straw for a bunch of tired and spitting camels.”

The band landed a deal with the Transatlantic record label following clandestine negotiations that Mick and Steve Sparkes held with Nat Joseph of Transatlantic. Steve was concerned that other members of the band were plotting to replace Mick with Jenny Ashworth and, in Mick’s words, effectively turn “the Deviants into the West London Jefferson Airplane.” The terms of the deal were two albums by the Deviants, and an optional third solo album by Mick. Transatlantic was primarily a folk label, and the Deviants were not the most likely of bedfellows for the likes of Pentangle and Bert Jansch, but Nat Joseph saw potential in signing progressive and psychedelic bands. Besides, he was having his arm twisted by Sparkes, who was calling in a favour. If Mick’s place in the Deviants had been under threat, everything was cool again having brokered a deal with Transatlantic.

Russell Hunter refutes the suggestion that he or any other member of the band was plotting to oust anybody:

> *It is one of the single most ridiculous and hilarious things I've ever heard, and if indeed Micky really thinks that, then it's just* a *complete weird aberration,* a *real bizarre left-field fixation. It's possible that Steve may have once said it in jest, or for some weird reason of his own — or it may have come from one of the countless episodes of convoluted babblings about all manner of crazy ideas and deeds, in various trances and chemical unbalances — but it was never* a *real idea. I actually have no memory of it, but if it did make that much impression on Mick, I have to suppose he got the idea, as crazy as it is, from somewhere outside his own head.*

Similarly, Jenny Ashworth can't remember any plans for her to replace Mick as singer, although with regards to a West London Jefferson Airplane she admits to being a fan of Grace Slick.

Regardless of whether Russell and Sandy wanted Mick out of the band or not, the decision to replace Sid was pre-empted by his own departure. Away on the road as often as he was, combined with an increasing use of drugs and alcohol, it wasn't long before the cracks started to appear in Sid's marriage. In an interview with the fanzine *UHCK* in 1993, Sid spoke of the fear that a planned tour of America had on him: "I did not want to leave the UK at that time as I had a young child, and my marriage was already heading for the rocks. Going on a long tour would have been the last straw." Sid figured it was as good a time as any to bow out when he got wind of plans to bring in a new guitar player. Today, Sid is very matter of fact about the whole thing. "I left in the spring or summer of 1969," he says, "I cannot remember now what my last gig was, but I know the next one was to have been Yeovil. I can remember thinking, 'Thank God I don't have to go to Yeovil!'"

With Sid's departure from the Deviants came the much vaunted Paul Rudolph from Canada. Paul Rudolph was born on June 14, 1947, in Vancouver, British Columbia. At the age of three he was playing drums on pots and pans, and by six had graduated to a Lil' Abner drum kit from the

Sears catalogue. At nine he acquired his first guitar, a Harmony arch-top acoustic, to which he added a Dearmond electric pick-up.

Polio at an early age left Paul with a disfigured arm, but contrary to popular opinion this had nothing to do with his choice of instrument. “I just fancied the guitar and got an electric bass around the age of sixteen,” he says. “Guitar has always been my main instrument but I also love to play bass.”

As with Jamie Mandelkau, Paul grew up in Gibsons Landing and attended Elphinstone High School. He played in a number of bands before moving to Vancouver in 1966. It was here that he joined the Fast Flying Vestibule, whose claim to fame was winning the British Columbia Battle of the Bands contest in 1967. Success was short lived and the Fast Flying Vestibule disbanded six months later. Paul’s next band was the Hydroelectric Streetcar, the first band to play at the newly opened Pacific Coliseum, where they opened for the Doors.

Paul’s influences included soul and funk artists Sam and Dave, James Brown, British bands the Who and the Yardbirds, and guitar legends Jeff Beck and Jimi Hendrix. He was also a fan of the west coast psychedelia of Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead.

In Britain Jamie Mandelkau regaled his new friends, the Deviants, with stories of Paul’s guitar prowess, while at the same time informing his pal in Vancouver of the underground psych band from London, who would possibly be in need of a new recruit very soon. By the time Sid Bishop quit, Paul Rudolph was already on his way to England. Legend has it that Paul Rudolph arrived at 212 Shaftesbury Avenue with just the clothes on his back and two guitars. Says Boss:

> *I remember the first night he was in town, and I got the call, ’Come up to Shaftesbury Avenue . . . meet the new guitarist,’ and when me and Tony Wigens walk in, there was this fucking lumberjack. I mean, you know? He looked like* a *lumberjack, and light green elephant cord trousers, and an orange and black striped Bolero t-shirt thing and the longest kind of lankest hair, and he’s not* a *little man, and then he’s got his withered arm, and you’d think ’Wow*

man!' I always thought that his withered arm was like something that made him more determined to be a fucking brilliant guitarist.

During their first rehearsal together, upstairs in a pub in Islington, it became clear that Jamie Mandelkau wasn't exaggerating about Paul; he was indeed a guitarist of extraordinary talent. "He claimed he'd never played lead, only bass, but he did it and he took off," recalls Boss. "We loved him right from the word go. He played this amazing guitar and he just got better and better."

Not long after Paul's arrival the band retreated to Cornwall for a week. Following the lead of Traffic, who went to rural Berkshire in the spring of 1967 to record their landmark British psychedelic LP *Mr Fantasy,* the Deviants decided they would also "get it together" in the countryside. Mick considered the idea of a rural retreat as a complete waste of time, but the rest of the band saw it as a perfect opportunity to write and rehearse new material, while trying out their new Simm-Watts equipment. Farren's once autocratic control over the band was slipping.

"We packed [the equipment] in the truck and went down to a place that was rented or owned by a lightshow guy from the Pretty Things called Mike Caple," says Sandy. "We went down to a place called Pentewan in Cornwall, and he'd like hired the village hall, or asked for it, because they probably didn't have any fee, and we set it all up and made a terrible din whilst taking lots of LSD." Little progress was made in rehearsing and writing new material and the entourage of band, roadies and girlfriends split into different cliques for the week, spending most of the time taking drugs and drinking heavily in different parts of the village of Pentewan. Guitar virtuoso and new boy, Paul Rudolph, smoked dope all day in his sleeping bag with an annoying woman and made excuses not to rehearse.

This was not good for Mick Farren's deteriorating mental health and it served only to heighten his paranoia, fuelled in turn by his astronomical use of Methedrine and the prescription inhalers necessary for his lifelong asthma affliction. Mick doesn't agree: "I'm not sure I was all that paranoid, I mean I was being conspired against wasn't I?"

Sandy recalls that the band had taken a bag of LSD with them that wasn't very good. "When I say it wasn't very good, it wasn't what I was

used to," he elaborates. "It wasn't hippy trippy, trippy dippy. It was quite fierce, it was a case of 'don't touch the blue acid,' and we did!" Boss remembers dropping a lot of LSD with Russell and Jenny Ashworth on the beach, and afterwards a particularly bizarre situation when some of the group went to visit Sandy in the cottage where he was staying. The owner of the place had a pet bat that was loose in the house, and it flew round their heads in the living room whilst they were all drinking tea.

Sandy isn't so sure about the bat and attributes it to the LSD.

With regards to the rehearsals, Boss remembers very little, although he does intimate that Rumbling B(l)ack Transit Blues originated at these sessions. The only other song that came out of the Pentewan retreat was First Line (Seventh Row), inspired by a late night, LSD fuelled flying saucer hunting expedition on the beach. The band had not made the most of the Cornish excursion, and all was not well within the Deviants camp on their return to London.

Mick had always provided the vision and direction, and tended to do the decision making, but Paul Rudolph's arrival heralded a shift in the balance of power within the ranks of the band. Boss says:

> *Things started getting* a *little more lively with Paul Rudolph in the group. At last someone's taking it musically seriously. Micky knew what he wanted to do, but he had to have someone take care of the music. He wrote fantastic lyrics and he's even got the occasional tune in his head but because he can't sing properly in tune he found great difficulty in expressing himself to* a *proper musician.*

Rudolph knew which way he wanted to go, and Russell and Sandy liked the direction. In 1987 Russell told Jonathon Green: "Before Paul Rudolph came we were a novelty act really. I guess it was a bit like the Sex Pistols in a way; in terms of insulting the audience and being too totally incapable to do anything, but we never had a Malcolm McLaren. Then Paul Rudolph had arrived and we'd started definitely upgrading ourselves — both in our own estimation and for other people."

Even Mick initially thought Rudolph was a breath of fresh air, and some of the animosity that had built up within the band was dispelled to an

extent. But as Paul Rudolph's guitar came to dominate, Mick was being marginalised. He said in his autobiography: "My only complaint was that the guitar solos grew longer and longer, which left me with that Roger Daltrey, onstage redundancy of hopping from one foot to the other and banging a tambourine while the great guitar screeched and thundered on." Not that this was Mick's only concern: he wasn't entirely happy about Jamie's greater involvement in the day to day running of affairs. Jamie now had his fellow Canadian friend installed and the rhythm section was onside, too; it was obvious that the cards were stacking against Mick.

"If you go down to the woods today" - Deviants in Epping Forest. (Photograph by Robin Morrison, courtesy of Dinah Morrison)

Thinking back, Mick says that if he'd been more mature about the situation he would have left the Deviants before the third album had even been started. As it was, his stubborn ego and pride wouldn't allow it. Besides, the prospect of a prestigious spot on one of Blackhill Enterprises' Hyde Park shows, and a potential tour of America later in the year, were far too alluring for Mick to leave of his own accord.

part one

Twink and Took, and a Pink Fairies Book

Twink was born John Charles Alder in Colchester, Essex, on November 29, 1944. He came from a musical family: his grandmother on his father's side was a concert and solo pianist, and on his mother's side were musical connections with dance bands. His great cousin played a Wurlitzer organ.

By his own account, music had always captured Twink's attention and the guitar was his first instrument. He played in a succession of skiffle bands, the first being a band called the Angels with his cousins, which performed a couple of times at the local Saturday morning picture shows but nothing more. Twink's next musical venture was also on guitar with a group called the Airliners, but he was sidelined to the washboard after he gave his guitar to someone else in the group, a much better guitarist who didn't have his own instrument. The washboard was Twink's introduction to percussion, thus beginning his long association with the drums.

A skiffle group called the Black Zillions followed the Airliners, and they consisted of some twenty five members. "It was outrageous," says Twink. "There were three or four tea chest bass players, about fifteen guitarists and five or six washboard players. It was crazy!"

The young Twink may have been immersed in the local skiffle scene, but rock'n'roll was beginning to make its mark. In an interview with Nick Saloman for *Ptolemaic Terrascope* magazine, Twink says: "I'd been into Bing Crosby before rock'n'roll came along — I saw *Rock Around The Clock* and I was gone. Absolutely sold." The movie made a great impression on him, and for a time he played with a couple of Colchester bands under the rock'n'roll name of Johnny Flash. The bands were Jimmy Pilgrim and the Strangers, a covers band in the tradition of Cliff Richard and the Shadows, and Eddie Lee Cooper and the Trappers, who were more like Eddie Cochran and Gene Vincent, and even supported Vince Taylor at the 2-I's coffee bar.

Twink would become involved in a number of other bands during the years that followed, including an R&B combo called Dane Stephens and the Deep Beats, which he joined in 1963. A year later they changed their name to the Fairies — no relation to the Pink Fairies, except for Twink's involvement in both — and recorded a cover of Bob Dylan's Don't Think Twice It's Alright. In 1965 the Fairies released two more singles on HMV Don't Mind and Get Yourself Home, before eventually splitting up (the latter had originally been recorded, but never released, by the Pretty Things).

It was in the Fairies that John Charles Alder acquired the nickname Twink. Fans would send the band gifts and because John had long curly hair, he was frequently the recipient of a particular brand of hair perm lotion called Twink.

The Fairies relocated to London and Twink immersed himself in the London music scene, hanging out with the Pretty Things, who also had the same agent as the Fairies, Bryan Morrison. Twink even ended up sharing a flat with the Pretty Things bassist John Stax, and through his acquaintance with Stax came Twink's on-off association with the Pretty Things.

The first time Twink played drums for the Pretty Things was during the making of *Get The Picture,* the Pretty Things' second album. Fellow Fairies bandmate, bassist John Gandy, had been drafted in to deputise the recording session because John Stax was on his honeymoon. Also absent from the session was Pretty Things drummer Viv Prince, otherwise disposed at Her Majesty's Pleasure following an altercation at Stax's wedding celebrations

the night before (in an incident that involved a policeman and his helmet). Having accompanied John Gandy to the session, Twink was in the right place at the right time and ended up playing on two tracks in Prince's absence. These were You Don't Believe Me and We'll Play House, for which Twink gets a co-writing credit under his real name, albeit misspelled.

Twink left the Fairies for the In-Crowd, another R&B group, who had already released three singles. The first of these, That's How Strong My Love Is, reached number forty eight in May 1965, before they changed their name with the advent of psychedelia to Tomorrow (best known for the single My White Bicycle). Not receiving the critical success they deserved at the time, Tomorrow's eponymous LP is something of a psychedelic classic today. Whimsical numbers aside (Three Jolly Little Dwarves and Auntie Mary's Dress Shop), it contains genuine psychedelic masterpieces, such as Real Life Permanent Dream and Now Your Time Has Come. Tomorrow consisted of Keith West on vocals, guitarist Steve Howe, and John "Junior" Wood and Twink on bass and drums respectively.

Having made an impression at the 14-Hour Technicolour Dream the previous year, Tomorrow split up shortly after the release of their one and only album early in 1968. West embarked on a flop solo career, and is more famous today for the saccharine Excerpt From 'A Teenage Opera.' Before finding success with prog monsters Yes, guitarist Steve Howe formed the short lived Bodast (ex-Deviant Clive Maldoon was briefly the singer). The Tomorrow rhythm section of Twink and John "Junior" Wood went on to form the Aquarian Age with Tomorrow producer Mark Wirtz.

The Aquarian Age released 10,000 Words In A Cardboard Box in May 1968, which was deemed Single of the Week by *Record Mirror,* and is today regarded as a landmark of British psychedelia. Twink provided vocals but did not drum on the track, and neither did Junior play bass, according to Wirtz. Ostensibly, the Aquarian Age were made up of session musicians regularly used by the producer. Wirtz says: "Twink was a jolly good player, but his timing was loose and his sound nowhere near as solid as Clem [Cattini's — former Tornadoes, and later respected session drummer]." The Aquarian Age was an important project for Twink, and he would rework 10,000 Words In A Cardboard Box, their one and only single, just over a year later for *Think Pink*, his first solo album.

Twink found himself drafted into the Pretty Things to help with percussion duties for their seminal album *S.F. Sorrow Is Born* (now generally regarded to be the first "rock opera," its release in December 1968 pre-empting the Who's *Tommy* by nearly a year). The making of *S.F. Sorrow Is Born* was full of hitches, not least of them being drummer Skip Alan absconding to France having recorded just four of the tracks. In a 1989 interview for *Ptolemaic Terrascope,* Twink told Nick Saloman: "Skip Alan had just left the Pretty Things, so Dick Taylor said, 'Twink, Skip's left and we've got to go to Italy over the weekend, can you help us out?' I said 'OK, but only for the next month,' because I was working on this Aquarian Age project with Junior. Actually, I stayed with them longer than that." Nearly eighteen months in fact.

Phil May of the Pretty Things is quoted as saying that the band couldn't afford to pay Twink and so had no option but to cut him in on a share of the album's publishing, in spite of the fact that most of the songs had already been written.

Twink wasn't signed to the Pretty Things' contract with EMI when they moved from Fontana, but was already contracted to EMI because of his earlier obligations with Tomorrow, although he did sign a contract renewal with the rest of the band in 1968. In *Growing Old Disgracefully,* his biography of the Pretty Things, Alan Lakey says: "This apparently insignificant matter would later cause Twink much financial grief and provide a major headache for all concerned." This would not be the last time Twink was involved in complicated publishing arrangements.

Twink wrote some of the material and contributed to most of the recording. He also helped to assemble a stage production of the album when it became clear that the intricate production arrangements and use of mellotron would prohibit a live performance. The stage production consisted of two mimed performances at the Chalk Farm Roundhouse, in which various members of the Pretty Things played characters from the story to a backdrop of psychedelic lighting and backing tapes. Twink, never one to shy away from the limelight, played the leading part of S.F. Sorrow, whilst Phil May narrated the story. Wearing a black leotard and white face makeup for his portrayal of S.F. Sorrow, Twink created an image with

which he would be associated over the years, particularly during his time with the Pink Fairies.

During 1968, the Deviants got to know the Pretty Things very well, and the bands became good friends on stage and off. Gigs featuring both the Deviants and the Pretty Things were quite an event: the Deviants would open the proceedings with their own material interspersed with a number of covers, such as Velvet Underground's Sister Ray. A barrage of fuzz and distortion was the cue for members of the Pretty Things to get up on stage and launch into a chaotic free form jam to close the Deviants set. The Pretty Things would then perform their own material and end with a cover of Why? by the Byrds. This was the cue for the Deviants, by now intoxicated, to join the Pretties and engage in a prolonged, rumbustious, jam session all over again, until they tired, or the plugs were pulled.

The Deviants playing on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral, Christian Aid Week, May 12-17, 1969 (Photograph by Robin Morrison, courtesy of Dinah Morrison)

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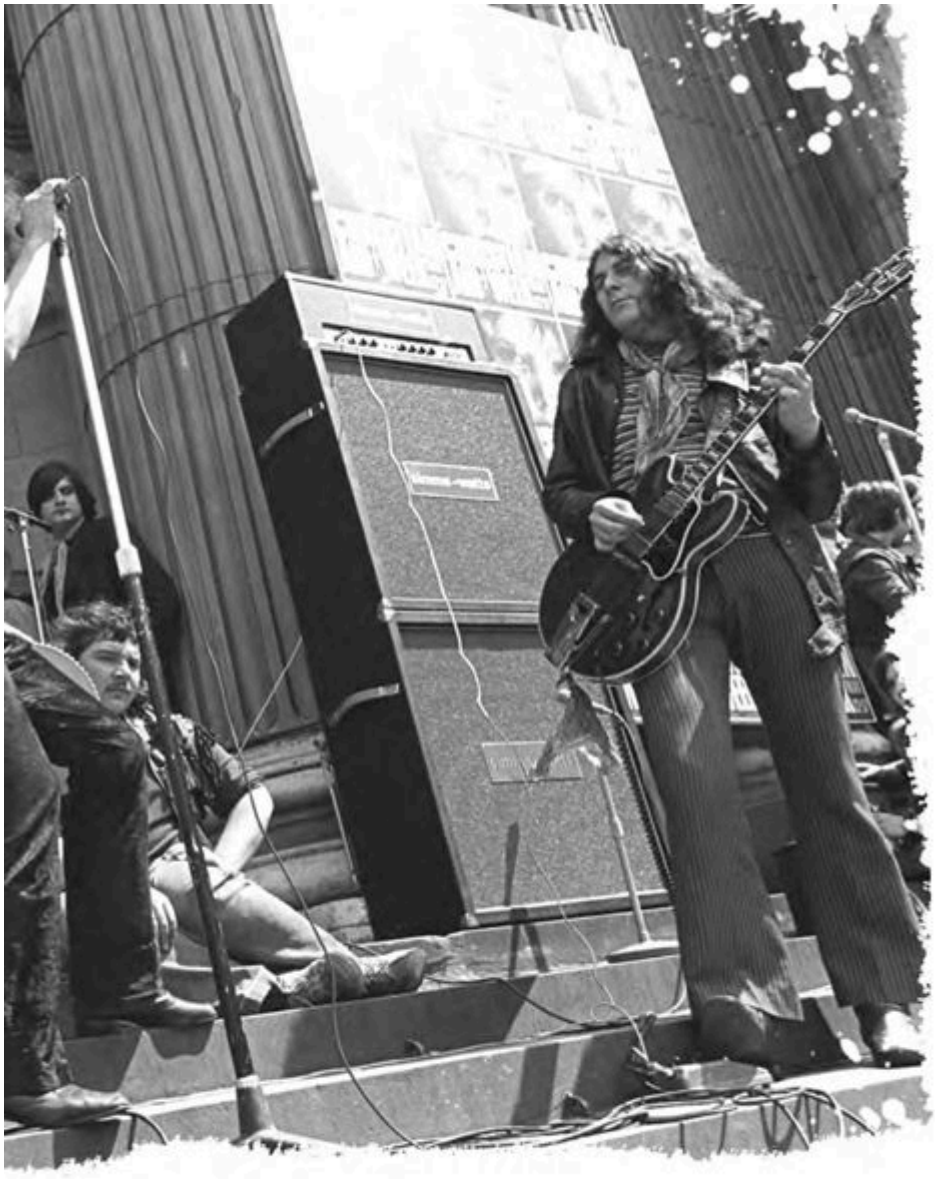


and launch into a chaotic free form jam to close the Deviants set. The Pretty Things would then perform their own material and end with a cover of Why? by the Byrds. This was the cue for the Deviants, by now intoxicated,

A Deviants and Pretty Things show would often degenerate into total chaos. When they shared a bill with Pink Floyd and Aynsley Dunbar Retaliation at Newcastle City Hall, the plugs were pulled at 10.30pm on the Floyd, while in the balcony the Deviants and Pretty Things participated in a spirited orgy with some groupies.

Any number of musical miscreants acquainted with the Pretty Things and Deviants could be relied upon to turn up in support of a hometown gig. Notorious acquaintances, such as Steve Peregrin Took from Tyrannosaurus Rex, Legs Larry Smith from the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band, and Pretty Things drummer Viv Prince, would lend their musical talents and skills in hellraising to an evening's performance.

One memorable evening took place at Chelsea College, when Twink discovered trays of eggs in the refectory and proceeded to pelt the crowd. The crowd, made up of sports jocks, did not take to having their evening finery messed up by a degenerate bunch of rock musicians high on booze and drugs. This amalgam of friends and musicians would continue to cause mayhem, much to the consternation of the Bryan Morris Agency, mutual agents for the Deviants, the Pretty Things and Tyrannosaurus Rex. The agency considered such behaviour detrimental to achieving any kind of mainstream success.

Things came to a head with the agency in April 1969 after a gig at the Lyceum that Tyrannosaurus Rex was headlining. Mick Farren says: "Took insisted that a whole bunch of us go down the Lyceum, I'm not sure who exactly — certainly me, John Povey, Phil May, maybe Legs Larry Smith and Rudolph." Following much carousing backstage, during the finale of the Tyrannosaurus Rex set the rabble was invited on stage by Took to unleash their customary aural onslaught on the unsuspecting audience. It was at this point that a furious Marc Bolan walked off.

Soon after this incident the Bryan Morrison Agency sent out a notice forbidding the members of the various bands to play at, or even attend, one another's shows. It would not necessarily be heeded.

The hellraising buddies were officially given a purpose and a name when Mick Farren wrote in a piece for *IT* called "A Fairy Tale," that:

> *A number of musicians from* various *well known bands in London have, it was revealed to* IT *in an exclusive interview this week, formed an organisation known as the Pink Fairies Motorcycle Club and All Star Rock and Roll Big Band, whose aim is to promote subversion and fun during the summer of 1 969. The members at present wish to remain nameless although in the*

> *coming months the Pink Fairy in his full colours will become a familiar sight on the streets of the city. Membership is exclusive and strictly limited to musicians, bike riders, road managers or people with other outstanding personal attributes. At present,* a *series of weekly events are being planned that will extend, hopefully, through the entire summer ranging from cheap-admission indoor benefit shows to open air concerts and happenings in the streets and parks. These events will not be limited to just the London area however, but will extend into major towns throughout the country.*

The article purportedly quoted unnamed representatives of the Pink Fairies Motorcycle Band and Drinking Club (PFMGDC) (in all likelihood Farren himself), saying how they were committed to encouraging audience participation, but also warned those of a more serious disposition: "If you can't get down with what we're doing, then you will just get disgusted." The PFMGDC aimed to bring some "old time looning" back into the music scene, as "rock'n'roll is basically stomping music."

True to the gang's avowed intentions, the PFMGDC wasted no time in putting their plans into action. On May 9 at an open air party in Parliament Hill Fields, they jammed through the night, following sets from Pink Floyd, Pete Brown's Battered Ornaments, Electronica Musica and the Pretty Things. The jam evolved out of the Pretty Things set, when drummer Twink stayed on stage and was accompanied by Mick Farren and Paul Rudolph from the Deviants, and Steve Took from Tyrannosaurus Rex. Other musicians and freaks joined and left the jam as the night wore on.

Mick Farren's *IT* article that week had been a reference to Pink Fairies as a concept to "promote subversion and fun," while the jam session in Parliament Fields was likely the true genesis of the band itself. Farren, Took and Twink, who had been the nucleus of the jam, would some months later adopt Pink Fairies as a band name, rather than a loose amalgam of musicians and friends.

Later still, Twink would hook up with Paul Rudolph, who was also present at the Parliament Hill happening, and, along with fellow Deviants

Hunter and Sanderson, re-appropriate the name for what would be regarded by many as the "real" Pink Fairies. Russell says:

> *It's generally thought that the Fairies grew out of the Deviants. I'm not sure that's really true to be honest. Certainly that first Deviants album, it was very much Mick's baby — more than the rest of them were — and to me I always thought it came across like Mick's English version of the Fugs, or* a *bad copy of the Mothers. Something like that. There was this odd kind of collage track. It was all very edited together bits and pieces in an attempt to create an amusing commentary on something. It was very little to do with us, it was really Mick. Which you could say to some extent the Deviants always were.*

There is some debate as to who should take the credit for the name "Pink Fairies." Fairies roadie Tony Wigens is sometimes credited with coming up with it, but Jamie Mandelkau is probably closer to reality when he says:

> *It was one of those things that was 'arrived' at from numerous drink and drugs sessions. I'd lean towards giving Mick Farren the credit, along with Steve Took for forming the Pink Fairies Motorcycle Gang and Drinking Club. We had no motorcycles but did drink. If you were there on the day, could buy the round, you belonged. Somewhere in this madness I did write* a *trite number of paragraphs about the 'Pink Fairies' as cartoon characters [in a Tolkienesque story based upon the Deviants and their acquaintances].*

Part of Jamie's story would find its way onto the cover of Twink's *Think Pink* LIP which was recorded during the summer of 1969, and similarities can be found between this and Farren's "A Fairy Tale" announcement in *IT.* One extract from Mandelkau's story reads as follows: "The pink fairies had one aim in life, one solitary purpose, and that was to bring light and goodness into the world. You might well guess this led them into constant battle with wicked Madame Darknes [sic] and her evil forces." Without

getting too academic about things, it's not too far removed from Farren's promotion of "subversion and fun." And Mandelkau's "evil forces" could easily be interpreted as an allegory for the music business establishment that Farren so often railed against throughout the late sixties.

Oz magazine also gave Mick Farren space to expound upon the motives of the PFMGDC, and in the August/September 1969 issue he talks about one of his favourite grievances: "The rock'n'roll business is ideologically in a very sorry state in Britain," he announced, drawing upon the clientele of the Speakeasy for an analogy. "I realised that the Speak divided itself into the ones who are getting uptight and the ones who are getting the others uptight. We seemed to be the latter group so we thought that a corporate identity might be a good thing." Farren was clearly taking the idea of the Pink Fairies more seriously than just an opportunity to have a drunken night out with the lads. "The Pink Fairies are organising a musical attack on authority," he states in the *Oz* article, "like the MC5 in Chicago, a strategic, organised and effective attack on the straights. The real purpose is basically to try and be outrageous."

Mick was at pains to emphasise the potential in using the medium of music as a revolutionary means, and stressed how spontaneous music happenings could be used as diversionary tactics to deflect unwanted attention away from any number of other useful underground activities:

> *A band can be used to block* a *street. It's very difficult to move it, especially if it's got* a *generator, because it's* a *peaceful audience which blocks the street. It's very easy for the cops to break up an angry crowd and hit them over the head with clubs, but if they're all happy and groovy it's very difficult to break them up. So, it's* a *thing that can be swung into use when the situation arises.*

Jamie Mandelkau also had plenty to say about the role of the Pink Fairies. "It's only lately that community violence has gotten to the 'level of us,'" Jamie told *Oz.* The establishment weren't yet in control of the underground, and it was imperative to keep it that way: "The Fairies have to open all the kids' heads. It won't be us that are in the forefront though — it will be the unification of all that the Pink Fairies have managed to do that

will be in the forefront. You know — the million kids that have risen to hear Mick sing 'Fuck it!' and stand up and piss in the street."

If the idea of a "million kids" rising up against the system to the rally cry of the PFMGDC appears somewhat idealistic, Farren's intention to upset the apple cart at the Speakeasy was at least fulfilled more than once.

On one such occasion, future prog-behemoths King Crimson were showcasing material from their debut album for the assembled music business big-wigs, as members of the PFMGDC were gathered on the other side of the room to celebrate the completion of Twink's solo album *Think Pink.* As full advantage of the booze tab was taken, the Pink Fairies party became inebriated, shouting to be heard above King Crimson, before Twink launched himself at the stage and pleaded with the bewildered band to play Nadine by Chuck Berry because he was unimpressed by their set. Some sections of the audience then called for the ejection of the high- spirited party. "Even some of us thought that [Twink] was going too far," says Mick, who had little time for King Crimson anyway. In the September 20 edition of *Melody Maker,* he told journalist Richard Williams: "I think we've been going against what's been happening on the so called 'underground' pop scene. We're not interested in dexterity, in this big technical thing represented by people like King Crimson. That's so sterile."

Also talking to Richard Williams (for the September 20 edition of the UK *Rolling Stone)* was Robert Fripp of King Crimson, who said of the Speakeasy debacle: "I had a premonition as I arrived that something would happen. I had no idea. The strength of antipathy came as a shock and represented the first reaction against our sudden acclaim. Russ Hunter apologised to me afterwards about the scene — he'd been too embarrassed to take part." Russell, of course, had been an old school mate of Fripp's at Wimborne in Dorset.

Although the Morrison Agency took a hard line stance on the gang and their shenanigans, the Pretty Things and the Deviants were considered something of a lost cause and got away with an awful lot. Steve Peregrin Took of Tyrannosaurus Rex was not so lucky. "They were concerned that we might do something to pollute Bolan who was clearly being designated to be a star," says Mick. With Took's insistence on continuing to hang out with bad boys, something had to give.

Steve Peregrin Took was born Stephen Ross Porter on July 28, 1949, in Eltham, South London, and became involved in music during his last year at school when he and some friends formed a band covering the likes of Cliff Richard and Buddy Holly. They played the events typical of a high school band: school dances, weddings and parties. By 1966, Steve was the drummer for a band called the Waterproof Sparrows, who played original material as well as covers. Taking a temporary job at the Post Office in order to pay for a new drum kit, Steve moved to Maida Vale in the summer of 1967, and around this time replied to an ad in *IT.* The ad had been placed by Marc Bolan, who was looking to form a band after his departure from John's Children. One chaotic gig at the Electric Garden was followed soon after by the repossession of the band's equipment by Track Records, and Marc and Steve decided to strike out on their own, without the other band members.

The duo moved into a flat together and Steve even sold his drum kit to pay the rent. Steve was now calling himself Steve Peregrin Took after a Hobbit in *Lord Of The Rings*, a book in vogue amongst the more mystical hippy wing of the underground scene. The drum kit and electrical instruments were replaced by a set of bongos and an acoustic guitar, and Marc and Steve continued as Tyrannosaurus Rex, busking in subways before making their way back on to the club and stage circuit. They secured a record deal with Regal Zonophone, and had a modicum of success with a clutch of LPs with long winded titles: *My People Were Fair and Wore Sky in Their Hair, But Now They're Content To Wear Stars On Their Brow* and *Prophets, Seers and Sages, The Angel Of The Ages.* Their third LP had a short title: *Unicorn.* These albums epitomise the more hippy drippy spirit of the times, but to an extent belie the fact that beneath the surface all was not well in Hobbit land.

Without dwelling too much on Tyrannosaurus Rex, it is necessary to mention the relationship between Took and Bolan and how it developed alongside Took's increasing involvement with Mick Farren and other elements of the agit underground scene in London. Steve Took was instrumental in instigating the PFMGDC, and was a prime mover in their riotous activities, so out of keeping with the image that Bolan and the band's management were striving hard to project.

An early bust for Took and his detention at Ashford Remand Centre for LSD possession had been overlooked to some extent by Bolan and the Bryan Morris Agency, but they both openly disapproved of Took's increasingly disreputable behaviour. His growing relationship with Farren, Twink and company, contributed to the deterioration of the relationship Took had with Bolan, and resulted in his eventual departure from Tyrannosaurus Rex during a tour of the United States. That wasn't the only reason. Took was dissatisfied with how his own creative input into the band was being stifled by Bolan. After the recording of *Unicorn,* Took continued to be met with point blank refusals from Bolan to use any of his own compositions, so he contributed his songs instead to Twink's *Think Pink* album.

In the meantime, the Deviants, give or take a few minor personnel changes, and the substitution of Sid Bishop for Paul Rudolph, would complete their third and final LP

The Deviants outside another church. This time, somewhere in Epping Forest, 1969 (Photograph by Robin Morrison, courtesy of Dinah Morrison)

part two

Death of a Dream Machine

In late April 1969, the Deviants reconvened once more to Morgan Studios to record their third album. It was a significant transitional period in which the band, physically and emotionally drained from extensive gigging and excessive drug taking, hadn't yet found a direction following the replacement of Sid Bishop. Indeed, they were so "creatively tapped out," as Mick puts it, they couldn't even come up with an original title and the new LP came out simply as *Deviants III.*

Mick says of the album in his autobiography: "It was the first one created by committee, rather than the dictatorship of my megalomania, and I hated the process. A committee rarely has vision, and Rudolph lacked the balls to have it all his own way." Mick's disdain over

Deviants III is no more apparent than in the insert that accompanied its re-release by Logo some years later, which relates the conversation he had with a Logo company representative concerning their plans for a reissue.

> *'You've got to be nuts.'*
> *'The retailers have been asking for it.'*
> *'Then they've got to be nuts.'*
> *'You don't sound very pleased about it.'*
> *'I'm not.'*
> *'Why not?'*
> *'Because it's horrible. We did that record nine* years ago. *The band was strung out on speed and drunk most of the time. We'd been on the road so long that we could hardly stand the sight of each other. A couple of months later we broke up. Do you need me to draw a picture?'*

Although it has its moments, *Deviants III* does seem very much to have been hastily cobbled together following the relatively unsuccessful sabbatical to Cornwall, the only fruits of which were Rumbling B(l)ack Transit Blues and First Line (Seventh Row), composed by Mick and Sandy respectively. But even the songwriting credits appear to have been an afterthought. Mick says his input was not as minimal as the credits suggest, and that he used a contractual dodge: "My publishing was signed to a company I didn't want handling any more money. In fact, I wrote all of the

song lyrics except First Line (Seventh Row), and some of the music on B(l)ack Transit."

Once again, Miles reviewed the album for *IT.* He alluded to the quintessential Englishness of the first two albums and inferred that in many ways, *Deviants III* was their first, the band having found it necessary to rethink their whole approach in the face of a re-emergent US rock scene, particularly in San Francisco and on the west coast. "The Deviants have had to overcome these criteria in order to reach their audience," wrote Miles.

> *(That is to say they have had to prove their technical competence in order to get their audience to restrain their musical snobbery enough, to actually listen to what the Deviants are doing). The DV's don't give* a *shit about virtuosity, their aim is to convey energy, to jump around and have* a *good time and to get their audience to jump around and have* a *good time. A return to old aims of rock'n'roll music, but they are unable to return to old form, simply because they, like all artists, are locked into the*

In other words, the Deviants were stuck between a rock and a hard place, and the aforementioned musical compromise was a necessary evil if the band were to reach their audience.

Miles states the overall sound of the album could be likened to a Pete Townshend production, which wasn't necessarily a bad thing given that the band were "experimenting with all aspects of their 'product' but there were some numbers where a clean mix might have been refreshing."

The album does have some memorable moments, one of the most notable being Billy The Monster. Mick has said that it is the only song on the album that he really liked. Miles called it: "The most entertaining track, a call and response number featuring some nice drumming from Russ, all very British (in his eye makeup) and with a growling melodic line in which new elements are added towards the end of the song." It is reminiscent of a bolero towards its finale, and is certainly unlike anything else the Deviants had done before. Mick took care of the main vocal parts whilst Boss and Russell attended to the call and response: Boss handling the *basso profundo*

call of “Billy,” and Russell responding with “the monster” in a high pitched helium voice, to highly amusing effect.

Elsewhere on *Deviants III* can be found the humorous numbers and spoken interludes familiar from the previous two albums. Black George Does It With His Mouth is a furious tongue twisting piece of mouthwork akin to Wildman Fischer, while The Junior Narco Rangers could easily have come off the Fugs’ *It Crawled Into My Hand Honest* album and conjures up all sorts of Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers imagery with its frantic refrain of *“Where’s the dope? Where’s the dope? Where’s the dope?”* Talking of dope, upon being asked by Miles who the album was trying to reach, Mick Farren told him “marijuana smokers.” He also said he was trying to make “a good functional record” conducive to “drinking, taking pills, and smoking dope.”

Miles summed up his review by describing *Deviants III* as “perfect for those who like to get out of their skulls on dope and lay on the floor and watch the cosmic garbage go by.” He omitted to mention some of the other standout tracks in his review. Rumbling B(l)ack Transit Blues is impressive in its build up from the sinister opening bass and vocal lines, to a fuzz guitar onslaught from new boy Paul Rudolph. Metamorphosis Exploration closed the proceedings with another conspicuous dose of Canadian guitar expertise, but even this is but a glimpse of what Rudolph was capable of, and a tantalising portent of what was to come.

For the press Mick was positive. He told *ZigZag* that “Paul has caused a sort of major revolution in the group and he’s brought a very much more musical content into the thing.” Certainly, over the next few months there was a technical proficiency and a musical cohesiveness hitherto unseen in the band. Unfortunately it was at odds with Mick’s own idea of what the Deviants were meant to be about, despite comments he may have made to the press suggesting otherwise. In 1996 he told Richie Unterberger that Rudolph “really had this idea to be Jimmy Page.”

Jamie Mandelkau is quite emphatic about the conflict of interests between Mick and the rest of the band, particularly Paul Rudolph: “By his own words, Mick Farren is not a singer in the traditional sense.” Jamie adds:

He is a damn fine poet. Mick was in his own vision, a street fighting propagandist, whose weapons were confrontational dialogue, howling music and stinging lyrics — when he wrote them. The problem was, Mick Farren could never define who he was, or wanted to be — Bob Dylan, Jim Morrison, Mick Jagger. And Paul Rudolph was a *musicians' guitarist. He wanted melody, bridges, guitar hooks and solos. Mick was good with the politics and absolutely terrible in the voice department. I always thought he should have pushed the envelope with 'spoken word' creations. For Mick Farren, I don't think it was ever really about the music; he wanted his slot in rock history — and certainly in time has been embraced—and didn't care what group of dysfunctional frustrated musicians he rode to some kind of stardom. Mick's open rebellion was before its time—the punks arrived a decade or so later. His social history lesson was kick the establishment, play three chord tunes, mumble song lyrics full of indignation and stay stoned, leaning more towards the amphetamine catalogue of delights.*

Despite the fears he had about losing control over the band, Mick still kept himself and the Deviants busy with other projects. Having secured a three-album deal earlier in the year with Transatlantic that included the option of a solo LP, Mick and the band had the good fortune of securing another deal with Seymour Stein's fledgling Sire Records in the USA.

Pete Shertser and Ian Sippen had been responsible for the deal with Sire, on a trip to New York paid by Nigel Samuel. Sire released *Ptooff!* in the US at the time *Disposable* was released in the UK. Shortly afterwards, Seymour Stein flew to London and signed the Deviants for two more albums.

It had become clear while negotiating a deal over the Deviants LPs that Seymour Stein was looking for other material too. After the Deviants deal was clinched, Mick Farren introduced Stein to Twink. The inveterate showman and show off certainly had enough charisma for Stein to be sufficiently interested, and Stein accepted Mick's proposition to front a Twink solo album with Mick producing. Using whatever spare time was available at Marble Arch Studios during the recording of Twink's *Think*

Pink, Mick and Jamie produced an LP for a country and western singer by the name of Trevor Reed. With Reed on vocals and guitar and the Deviants as backing musicians, Mick handled the production and, with Jamie and Reed, cowrote some of the songs.

Reed was discovered by Jamie playing in a coffee house opposite the Shaftesbury Avenue apartment. "Jamie had talked the guy up to Seymour Stein like he was Tom Jones or something," says Mick. "He had quite a nice country voice but he was real thick. We cut some tracks with him — Rudolph, Russell, Sandy, and maybe John Povey on keyboard — but they weren't up to much. I think there was one good song that I tried to do a kind of Phil Spector with, but it was all pretty lame."

For the press Mick was again full of praise. In an interview for the September 1969 *ZigZag,* he explained that Trevor Reed's album was "a bit like Nashville Skyline and goes through things like Donna and That's Alright, Mama, and progresses through Guthrie's Plane Wreck At Los Gatos, Dylan's Please Mrs Henry and some of his own material. It might sell quite well but it's not really earthshaking in terms of ideology." Ideologically earthshaking or not, Seymour Stein was obviously none too impressed with the results and the project was shelved. Says Mick: "[The sessions] were going nowhere and Seymour and I shut it down pretty fast. It was all kinda forgotten and we got on with Twink's bloody album that he's been flogging round the planet ever since."

Things are vague as to Sire's connection with Decca records, the label that had turned down the Deviants prior to their own Underground Impresarios record venture. It appears that Stein had some sort of deal going with the label, as Decca initially earmarked *Think Pink* for release in the UK. Stein was also charging all production costs through Decca, a situation Mick duly took full advantage of, charging recording fees for non existent session musicians whose musical parts were actually produced by a mellotron.

Think Pink turned out to be an eclectic mixture of experimental occult influenced material, Tolkienesque fantasy, blistering west coast Californian style acid rock, and the kind of whimsical psychedelia so prevalent in England at the time. Paul Rudolph particularly stood out and his incredible

guitar work was a highlight of the album, particularly on the remake of 10,000 Words In A Cardboard Box, equally as stunning as the original.

Think Pink was recorded between July and August 1969, with some of the post production work continuing into September. Accounts vary as to where it was recorded: The sleeve notes state Recorded Sound Studios, but Twink claims this to be mistake and that it was actually Marble Arch Studios. Mick agrees: "It was definitely Marble Arch Studios. It was the old PYE studio, where the early Kinks and Lonnie Donegan worked, but by then remodelled for eight-track." Twink says that a couple of the backing tracks and one other track were recorded at Decca Studios.

Most of the songs on the album are written by Twink, the exceptions being 10,000 Words In A Cardboard Box, which Twink had co-written with his former Tomorrow and Aquarian Age band mate, John "Junior" Wood, and Three Little Piggies and The Sparrow Is A Sign, for which the songwriting credits are shared with Steve Took.

Various components of what had become the PFMGDC were drafted in to help with the recording. All the Deviants contributed in one way or another, as did John Povey, Wally Allen and Phil May of the Pretty Things. Soon to be Pretty Things guitarist Victor Unitt played lead guitar on two of the tracks, and erstwhile Pretties drummer and hellraiser Viv Prince bashed the skins for another. Apart from Mick who was producing the album, the most prolific contributor from the Deviants was Paul Rudolph, who played guitar on all the tracks except for The Coming Of The One, which featured Jon Povey on sitar, and the vocal only Dawn Of Majic. On The Sparrow Is A Sign, Rudolph also plays bass guitar and chimes. Boss Goodman continued the tradition of singing roadie and is credited for vocals and percussion on Three Little Piggies.

Of the album's occult themes, Mick has this to say: "Twink was full of occult. Just like he was also full of shit. He glommed onto the appropriate words, but he really didn't have any serious background. I think he only half read the right books."

If the songs appeared to reflect themes popular in the counterculture, the album itself was largely passed by, and indeed didn't get a release in the UK until over a year after its completion.

In the wider world, the period in which *Think Pink* was recorded was littered with significant events: the first moon landing took place (Mick remembers watching it on TV at the Shaftesbury Avenue apartment after one of the *Think Pink* sessions), and of course there was Woodstock and the Manson family slayings. "We heard about the Manson murders during one of the later sessions, and Twink removed some mention of 'offing the pigs' [from the album]," says Mick. "Twink got all uptight and sanctimonious, which Povey and I compounded by wilfully finding the idea of freaks murdering the Hollywood jetset highly amusing, and treating the killings as a huge sinister joke on the rich."

Only three or four of the songs had been prepared by Twink in advance of the sessions, and much of the album was improvised and the songs written and recorded as the sessions unfolded. Everyone was very professional, however, which is surprising when one considers that Twink and Took could often be unreliable and uncontrollable. "John Povey helped me a lot with organising the sound," says Mick, adding:

> *John was real good and very cool and could also control Twink. I think he had something on him, and Twink was scared of him. I learned the trick of recording Took on the fly, before he knew what hit him. When he was good, he was good. When he wasn't he was* a *major waste of time. Thus if he sauntered into the studio, not fucked up and in a good mood, I got him straight down on tape because you didn't know how long it might last. It was a pretty good time, except for the bullshit in some of the content. And I just signed forms and we got drinking money out of Decca . . . Who could complain?*

Twink could. Some twenty years after making *Think Pink,* in an interview for *Ptolemaic Terrascope,* Twink told Nick Saloman: "I thoroughly enjoyed it. The only thing that was disappointing was Mick Farren's mix." Twink elaborates:

> *I decided to take control of the mix and I went back to Sire Records, and said, 'Look it's not good enough. I don't want Mick to mix it.' I mean, he was a great producer, he organised everything,*

great organiser, got people there, he got all the instruments there, he was great at that, but when it came down to the final mix it was absolutely crap. Fair dues, he did pull it all together, and got me the deal with Sire, but he didn't do the final mix, that was an effort between myself and Steve Took.

Marc Bolan may have been reluctant to use any of Took's songs for Tyrannosaurus Rex, but neither was he happy in Took writing songs and giving them away, as in the case of Took's contributions to *Think Pink.* This was one contributing factor in the breakdown of relations between Took and Bolan; another was a party thrown to celebrate some of the completion of *Think Pink* that took place on the eve of Tyrannosaurus Rex's debut tour of the United States. Having spent all night carousing with Twink, Mick Farren and other members of the PFMCG, Took inevitably crashed out and missed his flight. When eventually he did make it to the US and reunite with Bolan and the touring party, he brought with him erratic behaviour due to his daily consumption of LSD. At one gig Took stripped down to his underpants and wandered off the stage, leaving a bemused Bolan to finish the set on his own. At another gig, Took went to smash a chair on the stage, not realising it was collapsible, and broke his fingers. This encouraged Took to strip again, and he thrashed himself with a leather belt until he bled.

Took's behaviour and the pressures of the tour were getting to Bolan. By the time the tour reached Seattle, even Bolan blew a gig due to acid overload. According to Clive Zone in an article in *UHCK,* Bolan had gone missing prior to the gig and showed up just as they were due to go on stage, "tripping out of his head. The gig was a disaster. Marc turned his amp up and up until he had to be taken off stage and back to the dressing room and Steve split. Steve went his own way and did a bit of travelling about until he was arrested by the LA police trying to cross a freeway tripping on acid." Took was unceremoniously dumped from Tyrannosaurus Rex and flown back to the UK.

Twink on the other hand had yet to leave the Pretty Things. His departure followed soon after the completion of *Think Pink* and, depending on whose version you believe, he was either fired or left of his own accord. "I think in the end we fired him," Wally Allen told Alan Lakey. "We did a

gig, I think it was the Isle of Wight, it wasn't the big festival but he was incapable of playing, he fell off the back of his chair, he was absolutely ga-ga so we finished the set with Povey on drums and bye bye Twink and hello Skipper [Skip Alan] again."

Twink thinks otherwise. On the John C. Alder website, he says: "I got a little disheartened by the way things had been going with the Pretty Things and *S.F. Sorrow* because there was a lack of record company momentum behind the band. There seemed to be a lack of momentum from their management. So things were slowly going nowhere." He also suggested that his growing friendship with Mick Farren and the activities of the PFMGDC were another reason for his departure. "I was getting more and more interested in the sounds coming out of San Francisco and Los Angeles," says Twink. "And Paul Rudolph from the Deviants had the guitar sound that I liked. So we started working on my first solo album. It sounded so good that I decided to hand my notice in with the Pretty Things. With all the anarchic activities that myself, Steve Took, and Mick Farren had been kicking up, they weren't too displeased with the decision. It was mutual. I was unhappy with the situation and they could see that."

Think Pink was initially available only in the United States, on Sire Records, licensed by Polydor and released to coincide with the signing of the Pink Fairies in late 1970. On its UK release the album received a lukewarm reception in the music press. The *Melody Maker* said of it:

> *There's* a *track on this called Mexican Grass War that resembles the intro to* a Max *Wall music hall act. Max Wall is* a gas, *with his silly walks, and daft piano playing, and produces more originality than this attempt to drum up* a *frenzy, which actually turns out to be* a *monotonous bore. But there are better slabs of music on this somewhat strange album. Twink, formerly with Pretty Things, and now in a world of Pink Fairies and suchlike, which is not quite as bad as Mexican Grass War may first point. The Coming Of The Other One and Fluid are in fact good to pressure the mind with, heavy breathing and all that scene (which can be quite pleasing). I prefer to see the several of the other tracks as being fun. Musically there's little skill to offer, the same old heavy cliches still raise their*

now tiring heads. One wonders why people still sling them out. They aren't to be tolerated any more — it's just second rate rock playing, plus frenzied vocals. But again, several tracks are interesting, and Twink has come up with a fairly interesting album.

It was proving a busy year for the Deviants in terms of recording, both their own material and backing the likes of Twink and Trevor Reed. They were constantly gigging, too. They even played on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral for Christian Aid Week that summer, very possibly the first and only time a rock band has ever played on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral. For Paul Rudolph it was his most memorable gig with the Deviants. "The people gathered at lunch time — thousands of them," Paul recalls, "and the vicar's henchmen went about the crowd with their collection plates." The gig was arranged by a "trendy deacon," according to Sandy, who got himself into trouble with the Church hierarchy over scratches in the granite steps caused by the drum kit. The band had not been permitted to fasten the kit down and it was the duty of Boss to hold onto Russell's bass drum to try and stop it moving.

Towards the end of August the Deviants played a series of gigs that were tantamount to being promotional shows for the Transatlantic record label. Steve Mann, the publicist for Transatlantic, told Jonathon Green:

Transatlantic launched this ill-fated foray into electric music and they had this thing they called 'Where the Electric Children Play.' Nat Joseph had the idea that he wanted all these bands dressed up in nappies and paraded away to Hyde Park in prams — which the Deviants refused pointblank to do. Transatlantic decided that folk [music] had had it, and their new bands, apart from the Deviants who were by far the best, were Little Free Rock and Jody Grind.

The first Transatlantic promotional show was a free gig in the Welford Road Recreation Ground, in the foreboding shadow of the Victorian era Leicester Prison. On the bill with the Deviants were label mates Jody Grind, as well as the Battered Ornaments and Bridget St John.

A few days later the Deviants appeared at Rugby Town Hall with fellow Blackhill charges the Edgar Broughton Band, and the Third Ear Band. Mick

says that he was much more satisfied with the switch from the Bryan Morrison Agency to Blackhill because they had better venues and doubled them up with the Edgar Broughton Band.

The Deviants had hit some kind of stride although not everyone who made up their audience always thought so. Of the Rugby Town Hall gig *IT* reporter Mick Donovan wrote: “The Deviants performed a very good first set and got a quiet reception from people who largely didn’t know what it was about and didn’t care either.”

During the third number of the Edgar Broughton set a drunken Steve Broughton stumbled from his drum kit, staggered around the stage, nearly falling off in the process, and began to scream abuse at the audience. Mick Farren took this as a cue to plug in his microphone, whilst Russell Hunter commandeered the drums and an assortment of twenty or thirty roadies and friends joined the stage for the rousing Edgar Broughton sing-a-long paean to exorcism, Out Demons Out. Wrote Donovan: “The two or three hundred [crowd] just stared and didn’t know what was happening. There were so many evil spirits, we’ve all got some, but how can you help people who don’t even know or care that they exist.”

The second set by the Deviants fared worse than their first, and the most enthusiasm that the Rugby audience could muster was a fight in the bar. Putting a brave face on it, Donovan concluded in his report: “The revolution’s going to come, and we’ll be there when it does.” Even the usually indefatigable Mick Farren was showing signs of disillusionment with the politics within the underground rock scene. He told *Zigzag:* “We used to be heavily political, but the validity of that sort of statement coming from a rock’n’roll band is becoming somewhat questionable. It’s OK if you are in a band which is very closely allied to the community, but the community has become so diverse that it’s impossible for a group to be that much a part of it.”

As a live unit the Deviants were performing better than they’d ever done. If Mick hated what he now calls the “creatively tapped out” Deviants third album, or the “nun” album as it is sometimes known, he couldn’t deny that Paul Rudolph had brought to it a degree of musical discipline, not to mention professionalism within the band itself.

And as it seemed to be just getting started, with Hyde Park it all came to an end. The last Hyde Park show of the year promoted by Blackhill Enterprises was originally scheduled for Saturday, September 6, to be held near Speaker's Corner (rather than the usual Cockpit) with a line up that was supposed to include Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. Later the same day, the Deviants, Renaissance, and Mott The Hoople had been booked for an "Implosion" special at the Roundhouse, due to start at 7.30pm, thereby giving everyone time to make it over from Hyde Park. As it happened, Hyde Park was rescheduled for September 20. None of the American bands appeared in the end due to problems arranging work permits.

It may well have been a pity for those wanting to see the American west coast legends, but for the Deviants it turned out to be a blessing. They were now on a hastily rescheduled, less star studded bill, that consisted of homegrown British underground talent drawn largely from Blackhill Enterprises' own roster of artists.

Even Mick was impressed by the performance of his band at Hyde Park. Arriving in a two-tone Ford Zephyr chauffeured by a scantily dressed American woman called Vivienne Bidwell, the Deviants made a grand entrance and, as the early autumn sun cast long shadows across the park, proceeded to play the best show of their career. Mick was still jumpy from taking some kind of "alphabetti-spaghetti" psychedelic drug, as he puts it. Some accounts suggest it was STP. The band clicked as never before, and the usually reticent Paul Rudolph even enjoyed some onstage banter with the audience, between dazzling them with displays of his fancy fretwork.

Early editions of the *News of the World* the following morning featured a photograph of Mick Farren cavorting onstage with a hippy girl, obviously in a blissed out state of abandon. It was good publicity, but the band would not have the chance to capitalise on it. Unknown to them, Hyde Park would be the last ever performance by the Deviants in Britain.

The people gathered at lunch time - thousands of them - and the vicar's henchmen went about the crowd with their collection plates' - Paul Rudolph at one of his most memorable gigs with the Deviants, St Paul's Cathedral, May 1969 (Photograph by Robin Morrison, courtesy of Dinah Morrison)

part three

Metamorphosis Exploration

Within a week of playing Hyde Park the Deviants flew to Canada. Accompanying the band was Boss Goodman as road manager, plus a roadie in the form of Jamie's close friend "longhaired" John Downie. Boss recalls that, "For some of us it was our very first airplane ride and copious amounts of valium and drink were required."

Jamie Mandelkau had taken advantage of his Canadian connections to arrange some gigs in his and Rudolph's hometown of Vancouver. "In simplest terms," says Jamie, "the gig was arranged via Paul Rudolph and his pal who owned the Colonial, and it was seen as a great way to reopen the place. I don't know if he had ever listened to any Deviants albums at this time. Paul Rudolph was well known enough in Vancouver music circles to pull a crowd." The trip could have provided the band with some transatlantic publicity, but instead it turned out to be a woeful disaster. In addition to Jamie's own relative lack of experience in managerial matters, was an exceedingly crooked and duplicitous promoter whose promises all

proved to be empty. As a consequence, Mick Farren's behaviour became even more erratic, pushing his already strained relations with the band to the point of no return.

Any illusion that they would be living the lives of rock stars during their visit was shattered soon after the band arrived. In Jonathon Green's *Days In The Life,* Russell says: "We were promised hotels and three or four gigs in this rather plush venue in Vancouver and then home again. We arrived and got escorted to what can only be described as a doss-house, where I'm convinced they were running an underage prostitution racket judging by the people we had to share beds with anyway." In *Anarchist,* Mick was similarly disdainful of the accommodation: "I've always had a taste for old and funky wino hotels, but this fleabag, hard up against the Canadian Pacific freight yards, was beneath even my tolerance of rough urban charm." The following day, the band had the relative luxury of a car ride in a fifteen year old Chevy to a radio interview and a promotional spot on the local television station.

The band was scheduled to play, and be paid for, three consecutive nights at the Colonial Music Hall in downtown Vancouver. Having been closed for some years, the Colonial had no regular audience to speak of, and it was left to the Deviants to "spearhead the reopening." The club was still half derelict and negativity hung over the band's first rehearsal in it. The disappointment felt by all was galvanised when, partway through the first rehearsal, Russell said from behind his drum kit: "I hate this song."

Predictably, the first show was sparsely attended. Things weren't any better on the second night. However, by the third night the crowd had swelled significantly. It was on this night that Mick chose to tell the crowd exactly what was on his mind: *"This is British amphetamine psychosis music and if you don't like it, you can fuck off and listen to your Iron Butterfly albums!"* Then in a display of free association he proceeded to howl, gesticulate, and scream "all the way to primal drooling," as he now recalls. Even if a minority of the audience cheered and lapped it up, the majority were repulsed. "They were actually seeing a human being in neural disintegration, right onstage, without hesitation and shame," says Mick.

Mick's erratic behaviour continued at the after-gig party, and was enough to cause more than a few raised eyebrows, even amongst his fellow

band members. Things went from bad to worse the next day and the signs were not good. Jamie turned up unexpectedly from England and broke the news that the promoter was reneging on his agreement to pay the band, because he hadn't sold enough tickets. It was the familiar old story of promoter screwing the band, and it certainly wasn't the first time it had happened to the Deviants. Boss told *UHCK:* "Nothing new this, we'd experienced it many a time and oft' in England, but these were totally different circumstances, thousands of miles away from home stuck with no spending money and the simmering discontent coming to a head, the vibes were getting real heavy." The Deviants no longer had a hotel and only scratch change in their pockets. Worse yet, their return airfares were invalid; they were stuck in Canada with no accommodation, no money and no way of getting home, and even if they could get home they couldn't afford to pay the rent.

Mentally, Mick was in no position to cope with the situation. As far he was concerned, Jamie had arranged all this, so Jamie could sort it all out. Jamie contacted Seymour Stein, who told the band to remain where they were for a few days. "I personally pitched Seymour in the USA/NYC office to help get the band on an airplane back to UK, and the cheap fuck wanted nothing to do with it," says Jamie. "In those days Stein and Co were not in the business of promoting bands, but adding titles to their music publishing company."

It was with the worst possible news that Jamie returned to Vancouver a few days later. Mick in the interim had remained out of it as much as possible, and was spending his time drinking and drugging with the local freaks in a hippy neighbourhood infamously known as Chemical Row. The chemical overload of Chemical Row served to exacerbate Mick's rapidly escalating meltdown, and whilst he did his best to avoid the other band members, he couldn't avoid them altogether as they themselves had become reliant on the benevolent inhabitants of Chemical Row.

News eventually came from Boss that the band had been invited to play in front of "a group of affluent looking hippies in beaded buckskin jackets, with the judgmental air of local counterculture movers and shakers," as Mick recalls them. Russell told Jonathon Green:

By then a *certain amount of friction had grown up between Micky and the rest of us. The way things go in bands. And we'd started to fool ourselves that we were pretty good and that Micky was holding us back. He was in* a *bad state. He used to completely fall apart for no apparent reason and start screaming at people and charging about. We'd got delusions of musical grandeur and we started to think, we don't need this.*

In a spectacular display of crashing and burning, Mick ranted and screamed and created a cacophony that the local counterculture bigwigs in their buckskin jackets were not expecting, and the rest of the band were hoping would not happen.

Taken with the idea of becoming a serious musical entity, the Deviants looked upon Mick's behaviour at best as an embarrassment. Even he must have realised he had reached the end of the line.

The following day the band sacked Mick.

Boss Goodman recalled in *UHCK* (January 1993): "We could no longer handle Micky's rapidly deteriorating state of mind, and at Mandelkau's instigation the rest of us met in a local laundrette where every excuse imaginable was muted as reasonable pretexts for sacking Micky from his own group." "Mick was 'garbage,'" says Jamie. "When people were listening for a singer they got an asthmatic, coughing, ranting poet."

At another meeting that evening — this one including Mick — Jamie admitted to failing to secure the money from Seymour Stein for the airfares home. The band decided to press on instead to San Francisco, and Jamie broke the news to Mick that the band's plans for the future no longer included him.

"I think I remarked how they could have had the balls to do the deed before we found ourselves stranded in bloody Canada," Mick says. "Then I came unglued, weeping and shaking."

Reeling from this bombshell, Mick went to find solace on Chemical Row and tripped himself out completely on LSD. Tracking him down to a biker bar, Jamie told Mick he had managed to secure a flight home for him the next day. Mick was in the advanced stages of tripping and hallucinating

quite badly, and the thought of getting himself ready in time to catch a plane served only to freak him out more. Boss took care of him though, and got a cab to take him to the airport.

Mick refers back to the making of *Think Pink* as a significant factor in his eventual dismissal from the Deviants. “The aftermath that no one talks about is that Twink had promised Seymour Stein to have a band together to promote the sucker,” says Mick. “Phil May warned him off borrowing the Pretties, which probably started his part of a conspiracy to annex the Deviants out from under me. He, Mandelkau and Rudolph started plotting, and all might have been well, except they plotted with all the panache of fucking schoolgirls, and had to get me full of acid and ten thousand miles from home to actually do the deed.”

In Canada, the remaining Deviants made the most of the continued hospitality afforded them on Chemical Row, while Jamie and Paul travelled to Seattle and were successful in securing for the band a week-long residency at the Trolley Club, supporting the Collectors. After raising the necessary cash for the bus ride they all set off for Seattle and the prospect of making some money.

Mick Farren on the other hand returned to London with a very fragile psyche, a severely dented ego and the prospect of having no band, no home, and no wife.

This page: 'Hippy members of the pop festival organisation pose outside 13 Arundel Road, Patching' – Boss and members of his old Ilford Gang at Phun City (l-r) Kevin Buckley, unknown, John Cox, Boss Goodman (Photograph from The Herald, July 24, 1970, scan courtesy of John Buss, Worthing Herald) That page: 'The Family Dog Becomes a Family' – The Deviants at the Family Dog commune in San Francisco, while stranded in North America in the autumn and winter of 1969. Paul Rudolph is middle left, seated next to commune spokesperson Chet Helms (beard, spectacles) (Rolling Stone, December 13, 1969)

The Family Dog Becomes a Family

BY BEN FONG-TORRES

SAN FRANCISCO — Every Tuesday afternoon they meet, always at 1 p.m., and always late, because kids and dogs want to get used to the place, and a few friendly tokes have to be taken, so serious talk doesn't begin 'til past 2. Hard to say who "they" are, because faces change from week to week. But every Tuesday about a hundred heads—most of them musicians, light show artists, and film people—gather at the Family Dog on the Great Highway, and eventually they take shape as The Commune, the free-form answer to Chet Helms' atrocious call two months ago for "a new force" for the dance/concert scene.

The Commune is greeted outside by the rolling Pacific Ocean across the Great Highway and by the sun upstairs. Inside about all there is is a blank calendar drawn on a stretch of butcher paper. (Let say here the warmth hooked, but th... as three or four nights a ... fed ... 'Ja wanna try ... a couple of ... and some films, and a ... a space helps and keeps evil-

part four

Who Needs Egg?

The debacle of the Colonial Club in Vancouver had left Mick and Sandy without the money they were intending to wire to Joy for the rent, and consequently everyone at the Shaftesbury Avenue apartment was evicted.

Mick learned that Joy had obtained money from his mother under the pretext of needing a deposit on a new flat, only it wasn't Mick with whom she was intending to move in. It was Jamie Mandelkau, who Joy was seeing on more than just a casual basis. This really stuck in Mick's craw, particularly when he considered it was Jamie who helped get him ejected from the Deviants. Until he felt strong enough to make alternative arrangements however, Mick stayed put in the spare bedroom at Joy and Jamie's new flat in Chesterton Road, and sought solace in the company of an old friend and *IT* worker Su Small.

The *IT* office was on Endell Street in Covent Garden, and in a state of disarray after an aborted takeover bid by a radical underground group called the London Street Commune. The group achieved notoriety when it squatted a building in one of London's most famous thoroughfares: 144 Piccadilly. They occupied the *IT* offices on the charge that it was pandering to bourgeois tendencies, or something similar. But the London Street Commune had no idea how to produce a newspaper under their own steam, and the crisis was resolved following their inept attempt at an underground newsheet.

Mick had misgivings about some of the current editorial team at *IT,* but he had no hesitation in deciding whose side he would take in the face of the London Street Commune threat. One member of the new *IT* team that Mick took a shine to was Edward Barker, a cartoonist from Birmingham, who would soon become an integral part of the Deviants and Pink Fairies extended family.

Business was back to normal at *IT,* and Mick was contributing to the newspaper again. He felt up to meeting with his old drinking buddies Twink and Steve Took, whose fresh antics together coincided with, or perhaps encouraged, an article by Germaine Greer in the October edition of *Oz.* In it she wrote: "King Crimson are still apologising for the gig they did at the

Speakeasy, which is the only regime which the Pink Fairies will ever upheave, because they were put off and harassed by a more than usually drunken and drugged Twink, Steve Tooke [sic] and Mick Farren." Greer bemoaned the credibility of the wider underground music scene in Britain in relation to transmitting revolutionary ideals, with particular reference to the futility of Mick's own efforts towards achieving these aims. She blamed not only Mick's inability to sing well, but also accused him of not being able to hear what rock music was really about, in turn suggesting that he didn't really understand his target audience, nor they him. "They wanted to have a good time," Greer wrote of the audience, "and there was this wheezing Jeremiah begging them to hate something. They were too good mannered even to hate him. Mick ended up hating nearly all his audiences. He meant to yell at their parents, but he ended up yelling at them."

The article, called "Mozic And The Revolution," appeared not long after a brief relationship between Germaine Greer and Mick Farren had ended, and one may in hindsight question Greer's motives for such a venomous attack. ("Germaine and I were together at a time that I wouldn't have inflicted on an enemy, let alone a warm and emotionally generous woman of whom I was very fond," writes Mick in his autobiography.) However, there is more than just a kernel of truth in some of Greer's observations. Presumably written just after the Hyde Park show and around the time the Deviants were headed for Canada, the article is prescient in the supplanting of Mick by Paul Rudolph. Greer writes:

> *. . . something has happened. The Deviants are no longer Mick Farren's Deviants. Under all the bullshit flummery of the Pink Fairies [MCGDC] something was really happening. A leather giant with a deformed arm, and* a *natural Charles II mane, leans into the mike and says with a maniacal smile, 'let's have some fun' before he drives off on deranged lead guitar . . . The band practises these days. They dig it. They are into it . . . The Deviants have discovered music. They used to be frail and pious. Mick's yelling was still preaching after all. . . . Mick has responded to the pressure, which looks these days like bouncing him clean off the*

stage, with a change in the group's public image. He is no longer il Duce. Russ and Sandy and Paul talk to the papers too.

By the time the article was in print the coup that Greer prophesied had already taken place, and Mick was back in England resurrecting the Pink Fairies name and raising hell once again with Twink and Took.

The trio took began where they had left off (the Speakeasy) and decided to form a band using the name Pink Fairies, a truncated version of the name given to their earlier agit-prop, drunken hellraising namesakes the Pink Fairies Motorcycle Gang and Rock'n'Roll Circus. Accounts differ as to whether it was October or November 1969, but their first and only proper gig took place at Manchester University. Twink's girlfriend Silver Darling accompanied the band on keyboards despite never having played before in her life. They hadn't rehearsed as a band, had no set arranged, and under the pretext of jamming created a cacophony for several minutes until dissolving into a drunken shambles and grinding to a dead halt. The gig was an unmitigated disaster. "The show was so unthought-out and unprepared that I resorted to going blind drunk before the train arrived in Manchester, and remember nothing of it," says Mick.

Twink told *Heartbeat* magazine in 1987: "We said, 'right now ladies and gentlemen, we present the Pink Fairies. It ended up, there was no music, with us standing in the middle of the audience, just talking to people, pulling down our trousers, farting in their faces — it was unbelievable."

Soon after the ramshackle gig at Manchester University, Mick was admitted to hospital suffering from an unspecified viral infection, or "organic unpleasantness" as he has since put it. (From his hospital bed he submitted an article for *IT,* which appeared in print with an apology at the end: "Mick Farren was unable to make this article the long detailed study of the R&R period he had intended due to sudden illness . . .")

Despite reports dating back to April that Mick was imminently due to start work on a solo "experimental album," nothing much had gone beyond the idea stage. Being hospitalised gave Mick some time to reflect however, and he considered the musical influences of his teenage years for his solo project, which would eventually come out under the title *Mona the Carnivorous Circus.* In January 2006, when asked if he had any idea of the

direction he wanted the album to take, Mick replied: “My only broad strategy was to go in guns blazing. This is not to say that there wasn’t a lot of pre-production, but it really was a Burroughs-style audio cut-up.” Armed with a bunch of disparate ideas and a clutch of rock’n’roll songs, the intention was to kick out all traces of the west coast Californian influences that had crept into *Deviants III.* But he would need more than Took and Twink to pull it off.

Following his discharge from hospital, Mick had a chance encounter in a pub with an American musician called Steve Hammond, which resolved the question of personnel: not only did Hammond put himself forward for guitar duties and volunteer himself musical director, he also recommended Johnny Gustavson and Pete Robinson, bassist and keyboard player in a band called Quatermass. (Before that Gustavson had been in an original Merseybeat band from the early sixties called the Big Three, whom Mick claimed may not have been great songwriters, “but when it came to playing Long Tall Sally, or whatever, they were ahead of the Beatles.”)

Steve Hammond also introduced Mick to Paul Buckmaster, a classical cellist who developed a taste for rock’n’roll whilst arranging David Bowie’s Space Oddity. Buckmaster would later work with Elton John on his first album, as well as avant-garde progsters the Third Ear Band on the soundtrack to Roman Polanski’s film adaptation of *Macbeth.* (He became a renowned composer of film soundtracks in his own right, a notable example being Terry Gilliam’s *Twelve Monkeys.)* He was more than amenable to Mick and Steve Hammond’s proposition. After hearing of his plans to create an experimental album using Bo Diddley’s Mona as its central motif, Paul played Mick some music by classical composer Bela Bartok to demonstrate the similarity between the two artists, and that the gulf between classical music and rock’n’roll was not as wide as people imagined.

Steve Hammond was responsible for hiring an excellent percussionist called Raul, who claimed to have worked on the Rolling Stones’ Sympathy For The Devil. Mick’s good friend Steve Took assisted with percussion duties and backing vocals. Mick’s choice for drummer however was “a damned fool one.” Twink was recruited out of a misguided sense of loyalty, says Mick. “Aside from having a self serving personality and a secret

agenda that would only be revealed later, Twink's timing could be decidedly suspect on the wrong night."

The entourage turned to Sound Techniques in December, the studio in which the Deviants had recorded *Ptooff!* Took and Twink were on their best behaviour, although Took's musical contribution was negligible anyway. "[*Mona*] was too much of a production to use Took as a guitarist," Mick recalls. "He helped with the singing."

The sessions for *Mona* unfolded without incident, and were undertaken efficiently and completed within the studio time allocated (in spite of Twink's tendency to "burn up time by slowing down," according to Mick). Ever keen to learn, as well as to experiment, Mick spent hours in the mixing room, on his own and under the tutelage of Victor Gamm, who had also been the engineer on the Deviants' first album. Before December was out the album had been recorded and mixed.

The cover of Bo Diddley's classic track as it appears on *Mona the Carnivorous Circus,* is an altogether different beast to that of the Quicksilver Messenger Service's California sun-drenched version of 1969. The album opened with the comparatively straightforward Mona (A Fragment), but was reprised to close the album in the shape of the brutal seven minute Mona (The Whole Trip), particularly memorable for the presence of Paul Buckmaster's deeply menacing Bela Bartok style cello. Mick is not wrong in saying that the track has a unique and timeless quality.

Different altogether are Carnivorous Circus Part 1 and Carnivorous Circus Part 2. Each song is comprised of four sections that provide a claustrophobic landscape of brooding. At times the album jumps wildly from one theme to another, making it appear somewhat disjointed. Took's "vocal whoops and chipmunk yodels," as Mick puts it, provide some light relief in the face of Mick's demons and the album's general air of paranoia.

Some of the more conventional tracks are characterised by Hammond's groovy wah-wah psychedelicised rock'n'roll guitar. These are interspersed by some intriguing spoken pieces: excerpts from interviews, speeches and recordings from the radio. The sections of the album don't always appear to correspond with those listed on the sleeve, but it would be safe to assume that But Charlie It's Still Moving is an interview with Crazy Charlie, out of

the Hell's Angels MC East London, the first officially sanctioned chapter of Hell's Angels in England. Crazy Charlie relates a tale of brutalisation upon him and fellow Angels at the hands of the police following an altercation with an Irish squatter.

Mick liked to flirt with biker imagery and had played host to two San Franciscan Hell's Angels in late 1968 at the Shaftesbury Avenue apartment. Of the bikers' English counterparts, Mick says:

> *They were very much like the 59 Club rockers I'd grown up with, so it wasn't so hard to talk to them, broker an ad-hoc treaty and drop* a *few pointers on how to co-exist with the hippies. If you respected their vanities, and their chain of command, as in, talk to the leaders like another leader, they weren't* a *problem. It was more of* a *pain-in-the-ass stopping judgmental fucking hippies from pissing them off. After Frisco Pete stayed at Shaftesbury Avenue, when he came over as* a *delegate from the San Francisco chapter, I was the man.*

This mutual affinity with the Hell's Angels would continue down the years. "Everyone got along with the Hell's Angels," says Mick. "They were real backbone fans. I think Russell and Sandy were a little leery of them. Me, Boss and Sparkes were the closest — and later Edward [Barker]." The album sleeve of *Mona The Carnivorous Circus* boasts the endorsement: "This album is approved by the Hell's Angels MC East London."

Some accounts claim that *Mona* is an indictment of the penal system, and certainly there is reference to imprisonment in a spoken interlude in Carnivorous Circus Part 2. Here Steve Took relates some of his prison experiences at Ashford Remand Centre, from the time he was busted for possession of drugs in 1968. Mick suggests the album is a wider indictment of a corrupt system in general, and that it served to highlight some of his own particular concerns. Commenting on his old website, he wrote: "I'm concerned with nothing except being weird with no positive concept except the fairly nebulous complaint that 'society sucks.'"

Mick Farren was excited about what it was he had created, with its "totally original juxtapositioning and matching of sources." The use of

audio cut ups, somewhat akin to sampling, was not common on musical recordings at the time, and *Mona* sported a range of these, including a Hitler speech, screaming jet planes, someone talking about murder, the interviews with Took and Crazy Charlie, and the sinister chant of *"Who needs the egg?"* (which evolved from a chant the Deviants used at the end of their live show, based upon the phrase *"Watch what you know")*.

Of the fairly conventional, if edgy, cover of Eddie Cochran's Summertime Blues, Mick glibly notes in his autobiography that its inclusion on the album was "assured to get me on *Top of the Pops."*

All these ingredients could hardly fail, posited Mick. But crossover success and the means to get his radical message to the mainstream masses were not forthcoming. "People listened to [pre-release tapes of Mona] and started looking at me very strangely," says Mick. "I had come out with something a tad too bizarre even for those who wished me well."

Get your end away at Phun City!' - One of Edward Barker's anthropomorphous cartoon creatures used to advertise the Phun City festival, July 1970 (Artwork by Edward Barker)

part one

West Coast Odyssey

It was with some trepidation that the remaining Deviants approached their gigs at the Trolley Club in Vancouver. Until recent events Mick had always assumed the role of group leader, both on stage and off; he was the charismatic front man and singer, and wrote nearly all of the lyrics. “It was down to [Micky], so nobody really knew much of the lyrics,” recalls Boss. “There we are, we don’t have a singer, it’s a three piece, and we’ve got to fulfil a contract playing in the Trolley Club for a week. So, Paul had to do most of the singing, Sandy did a bit, and I think they just started jamming and it seemed like an awful lot of Deviants riffs all coming into one thing.”

In addition they included a number of cover versions of soul songs and, according to Sandy, opened each night at the Trolley Club with an instrumental number by Junior Walker and the All-Stars called Cleo’s Mood. “Seattle thought we were pretty fuckin’ hot shit actually,” says Sandy. Echoing these sentiments, Boss says: “We earned quite decent money . . . people thought we were really good, and so we thought ’Shit man! Let’s go to San Francisco. If we can earn this sort of money in Seattle imagine what we can do down in Frisco!’”

Despite their fairly lucrative residency at the Trolley Club, the band was still short of cash for return airfares to England. (Some of their fee from the Trolley Club was deducted for a party supposedly thrown in their honour.) Heartened by the success in Seattle, the band hopped onto a Continental Trailways Silver Eagle coach, drum kit and all, and pressed on to San Francisco. They were finally living the dream, travelling on a west coast odyssey through places with names familiar from Hollywood movies.

When the bus rolled into Sacramento at dawn, all the passengers except for the Deviants disembarked and were replaced by downtrodden migrant and immigrant labourers, mainly black African-Americans, travelling off to look for work. The Deviants sank deeper into the seats at the back of the bus and pretended to be asleep. They need not have worried; the new arrivals treated the bunch of English hippies with little more than mild curiosity and amusement. They were after all in the same boat together at that moment: poor, and looking for work and better times.

By the time the Deviants arrived in San Francisco they were almost penniless again, with only a few dollars and a bag of half eaten bologna sandwiches between them. A vague notion about where they would go, and what they would do once they got there, was based upon a package of Grateful Dead records received at the Shaftesbury Avenue apartment some months ago. Whoever the intended recipient of the records had been, Boss made off with them to the secondhand shop and exchanged them for hard cash. Luckily, Boss remembered that a letter accompanying the parcel, from the Dead's manager, Rock Scully, intimated that if the Deviants ever made it to the Bay Area to look them up. He also mentioned Chet Helms's Family Dog commune out on the Great Highway, and it was towards this the entourage headed. They arrived on the day of the monthly commune meeting in November 1969. Reliant upon the goodwill of the alternative communities of the Bay area, the Deviants stayed at the Family Dog commune, and were later invited by a band called Mayflower to stay at their commune across the Bay in Oakland, which was fine until Sandy was caught sleeping with the girlfriend of the Mayflower guitarist. The band fell on their feet again with yet another commune, near Golden Gate Park. Says Boss: "I still, to this day, have no idea how we managed to get to The

Panhandle, on Oak Street in San Francisco, round the corner from the Haight-Ashbury, having been kicked out of the Mayflower's house."

The house on Oak Street was a sprawling San Franciscan mansion, also occupied by a weird hippy religious sect, and the Deviants were invited to live on its third floor. Things got off to a rocky start with a mealtime misunderstanding, when Boss transgressed the mores of their communard hosts. Says Boss:

> We *were all bloody starving, we were penniless, and it's the evening commune meal, and we all go in there, and there's* a *big pot of steaming garbanzo beans and brown rice, and seaweed, and God knows what . . . and then all of* a *sudden they're all linking arms and going 'Om,' and I broke the chain and burst out laughing and was sent out of the room . . . 'Sorry, you're not eating here. Please leave the room.' I was only saved from starvation 'cos Rudolph managed to sneak me out some food. The next night I'm 'omming' like* a *bastard, and shovelling garbanzo beans down me like there's no tomorrow!*

Eating nothing but pure organic food was a shock to the system after a diet of scraps on the road. The band came out in spots and boils, and had diarrhoea, but then, according to Boss, "within a fortnight we all felt like fucking Superman!"

The commune was large enough to have its own bakery. In addition to making their own bread, the communards made their own music, and the Deviants took advantage of a fully equipped music room on one of the floors. Recalls Boss: "The guys used to take organic mescaline, and they'd go in there, and they had their guitars and stuff . . . and they'd just jam for hours." Old Deviants riffs were reworked into elongated jams, out of which developed material that would later become Pink Fairies classics. Although the lyrics and title would come later, it was in the music room at Oak Street that a nascent Uncle Harry's Last Freakout was spawned, having been loosely based around the bass riff to the Deviants' Billy The Monster.

The limitless time spent in the music room helped create an almost entire new set for what remained of the Deviants. The band took stock from

the earlier disaster in Vancouver, and it gave them a new direction and purpose. Says Sandy: "Uncle Harry's Last Freak Out and all that — the reason why that evolved was because there weren't any Mick Farren agit-prop lyrics.'cos Micky supplied all the lyrics. . . . Micky did this, Micky did that, and suddenly it was just the three of us, and that was the most musically creative period of my life."

Contrary to this new direction and their success at the Trolley Club in Seattle, the band laboured under the misapprehension that San Francisco would be a veritable pot of gold. Paying gigs were few and far between, however. "[N]othing happened," Russell told *Zigzag* magazine in 1970. "There was no work there . . . the city can't even support its own bands."

Chet Helms arranged a gig for them at the Family Dog ballroom at the Great Highway in one of a series of events called Magic At The Edge Of The Western World. Promoted as a new band night, the "Deviants (English)," as they were billed, were nestled between Beggar's Opera, Arizona, and Western Addition.

Boss is proud that they played at the Family Dog, but is less enthusiastic about the other two performances the Deviants played in the city, both at another legendary San Francisco venue. "We played two nights at the Matrix," he says. "Fifty per cent of the door — we had a dollar-fifty one night, and three dollars-fifty the second night . . . it was like two people in the club—a big disaster, and well, nobody knew the Deviants, you know?"

Conversely, the Deviants played just one number at Berkeley University for which they received more money than all three San Francisco shows put together. As well as being the most lucrative, Berkeley was the most bizarre gig for the Deviants in the Bay area. It was a pre-match party on the eve of a football game between Berkeley and Harvard, and the band experienced the full razzmatazz associated with an American university football match. In addition to a huge bonfire with a burning effigy representing the opposing team, were cheerleaders, a marching band, fireworks and flares. "Ten Minutes before show time," recalls Boss, "they let in hordes of football fans . . . and then the coach comes out, 'Who do we hate? Harvard!' . . . and they're all throwing bottles, and chanting God knows what at this bonfire . . . and then he goes, 'All the way from England —

THE DEVIANTS!' Then the Deviants come rushing in, plug in — three minute set — unplug, and off! We got 150 dollars!"

The Grateful Dead exerted an influence on some of the Deviants, notably Paul Rudolph. The first time the Deviants saw the Dead play, there was a gunfight outside the venue and no one was allowed to leave the building. Initially, Boss was not keen on the Grateful Dead (he had flogged the Dead LPs sent by Rock Scully some months earlier). Locked inside the venue that evening, he recalls thinking, "What's so fucking great about the Grateful Dead. They were shit!" His opinion changed a couple of weeks later when he and the Deviants were inhaling nitrous oxide, better known as laughing gas, backstage at a Grateful Dead show at Bill Graham's Fillmore West. Boss took a hit of the gas, "at which point I heard the most beautiful guitar sound I had ever heard in my entire life. It was just wafting through the doors and I drifted out into the auditorium and the Grateful Dead are playing and all of a sudden it becomes very clear to me what the Grateful Dead are all about, and I was transfixed." More significantly, as will become apparent, "they had two drummers, and we all fell in love with the two drummers situation at that point."

Even if they didn't play many gigs themselves, San Francisco was not quite the cultural wasteland suggested by Russell. It was a riot of new experiences, and the Deviants revelled in the vibrant cultural scene in the city, soaking up the music it had to offer. As well as the Grateful Dead, they took in gigs by other local legends, such as Jefferson Airplane, Steve Miller, It's A Beautiful Day, as well as Crosby, Stills, & Nash, and the Velvet Underground, who had been so influential on the early Deviants.

Boss and Paul Rudolph even had the dubious honour of attending the infamous Altamont festival staged just outside San Francisco in December 1969, which featured the Rolling Stones, Grateful Dead, Santana, Jefferson Airplane and a whole bunch of Hell's Angels employed by the Stones as security. The Rolling Stones tour manager, Sam Cutler, was in need of all the help he could get for the big free show at the Altamont speedway track. Boss and Rudolph hitched to the venue, some thirty miles outside San Francisco, and worked through the night to help erect the stage and lighting towers. Boss says there were "loads of little magic moments," such as seeing Augustus Owsley Stanley III, the legendary underground LSD

chemist up a sound tower. “It was magic . . . as the sun came up it looked beautiful. We could see pilgrimages of hippies coming over the horizon, coming down, slowly building up. Unfortunately, stage right there’s this dirty great pick-up truck full of Hell’s Angels that had all been plied with Quaaludes and Ripple, the chemical wine, and stuff like that, to keep them happy. So they all had sore heads when they started getting up around noon, and by then we had everything up and running.”

For much of the day Boss and Rudolph hung out backstage, watched the bands, or slept. But as the atmosphere turned heavy with skirmishes erupting between the Hell’s Angels and the rest of the audience, they sought the relative sanctuary of the Family Dog bus. Even so, they still ended up “watching some of the most atrocious sights you’d ever seen,” says Boss.

Once again the Deviants tried to convince Seymour Stein to put up the cash for the airfares; after all he was supposed to be the manager of their record label in the United States. Boss says that Stein agreed to meet in Chinatown, but reneged on the arrangement, whilst Russell says the meeting took place at a burger joint. Says Russell: “He invited us all to dinner in this crummy roadhouse bar and we had a pretty horrible dinner of hamburgers and beer and at the end of it he put his hand in his pocket and said, ’Oh shit, boys, I don’t have my cards.’” Not only did Stein leave the boys to pick up the tab for the meal, he didn’t give them the return airfares to England either. As a compromise however, Stein fixed them up with a series of gigs at McGill University in Montreal, the intention being they would have to earn their passage home. It was shit or bust time: if they didn’t pull the crowds, they didn’t get a decent percentage of the receipts off the gate, and they would be back to square one. Stein was only willing to provide four one-way tickets to Montreal and the gigs: Paul, Sandy, and Russell were obviously guaranteed tickets, but Boss and John Downie would have to fight over the fourth ticket and face the prospect of remaining in San Francisco. Boss remembers that Downie tried staking a claim on the fourth ticket: “John Downie said ’Looks like your gonna be staying in San Francisco, mate! And the band turned round and said to him, ’You’ve got to be fucking joking, mate! Boss is coming with us, you’re the one staying!’ So that was that. I had no fears that that was going to happen because we were like a family.”

John Downie remained in San Francisco. Streetwise Glaswegian that he was, Downie took advantage of the connections he had made with various musicians and dealers, and headed for Vancouver, where he set up an MDA racket. (MDA is a variation of the drug Ecstasy, otherwise known as MDMA.) Unfortunately, a relationship with a girl from Edmonton, whose father was a Chief of Police, proved to be his undoing. The girl turned him in whilst "stoned out," and Downie was one day pulled off a plane in possession of several pounds of MDA and indicted for trafficking. Jamie Mandelkau would be instrumental in securing Downie's release after eight years served in a Canadian jail. Downie returned to England and later moved to Tenerife, where he committed suicide.

It was with an altogether different sense of trepidation that the Deviants again ventured forth to Canada. They arrived at Montreal Airport on Christmas Eve to a snowstorm and sub zero conditions, dressed only in hippy finery better suited to the more temperate climate of San Francisco. Sandy recalls: "I was wearing a t-shirt, a crushed velvet jacket, with feathers in my hair, clutching my cigar box with all my important beads and stuff in, 'cos I'd turned *hippy!"* The band traded their first gig for warm clothes up front. "Somebody had given me a pair of gloves for my twenty first birthday and I really appreciated them."

The band settled into the hospitality afforded to them on the Montreal underground scene, and fulfilled their bookings at McGill University without incident. They secured a promotional spot on a television show called *Like Young,* the Canadian version of *Top of the Pops,* in which Sandy joined a studio discussion with Zal Yanovsky, the disgraced drummer from Lovin' Spoonful, and William Shatner, aka Captain James T. Kirk of the Starship Enterprise. Boss had forgotten to load the cymbals before leaving for the studio, "so we cut some out of cardboard and perched them on the stands," says Russell. "The band ended up being filmed in an empty studio, miming to a song off *Deviants III,* after which a crowd of people dancing was somehow superimposed onto the film."

The Deviants had made nearly enough money to pay for their airfares home and their thoughts were with plans of a new band with Twink, who, in Britain, was playing Mick Farren and Steve Took for suckers, plotting behind their back. On the John C. Alder website Twink is quoted as saying:

“I contacted the Deviants’ manager and said let’s get the guys back from the US because they were stuck in San Francisco with no money, they didn’t know how to get back and didn’t know what to do. So I told him, ’They’re the guys I want to be with.’ And so that’s what we did. We got everyone back and that was it. A month later we were on the road.” Jamie says: “The idea of Twink joining the Devies, and Pink Fairies now a working band instead of party crew, I think grew out of an osmosis of playing together, where everyone was in agreement to move forward with the project . . . There may have even been a notion that Twink could sing.”

Mick Farren believes that Twink had been conniving behind his back all the while they had been trying to get their own Pink Fairies project off the ground, even during the recording of *Mona.* He says that Twink cooked up a convoluted scheme that would lead to a heated argument, thereby giving Twink the excuse to leave on the pretext that their own Pink Fairies project was no longer a viable proposition.

Twink says there may well have been an argument:

> *I went along to the studio where they [Mick and Steve Took] were still working on* The Carnivorous Circus *doing some backing vocals, and I told Mick and Steve, ’I’m forming a band with the remaining members of the Deviants when they get back from the States — I’ve contacted them.’ Either Mick or Steve said ’What are you going to call the band?’ so I said the Pink Fairies. I think that was the falling out. It didn’t go down well!*

All sorts of plans were apparently already in motion, according to Twink, and Sandy recalls being told that “Eric Clapton’s on board, and we’re going to do a TV show called the *Pink Fairies.* Alan Aldridge will do the illustrations, and we’ll do the music!” Alan Aldridge was the illustrator for the *Beatles Illustrated Lyrics,* and he was supposedly providing graphics for the television show; Clapton’s part in all of this is not entirely clear. Sandy goes on to say: “We came back thinking we had a done deal and everything, and it turned out to be Twink bullshit. . . . It sounded great when we got back from the States, but I didn’t actually see a reality check on that.”

SCREWING-OFFICIAL REPORT CAUSES CLAP!

ANTI-SEX LAWS TO COMBAT PLAGUE?

TREATMENT OF GONORRHOEA AND SYPHILIS IS REACHING EPIDEMIC PROPORTIONS, ACCORDING TO RECENTLY-RELEASED FIGURES, AND IT WOULD SEEM THAT CLAP IS NOW SPREADING AT AN ALARMING RATE, AND WILL SOON BE FOLLOWED BY TORY LEGISLATION TO CURB "LICENTIOUS SEXUAL ACTIVITY".

TORY PIGS PRESSURE

BLACKS & POOR ARE FIRST TARGET

After only four months in government, the Tories are already pushing us up against the wall.

For 6 years, Labour pursued a chicken-shit fascism that, while pretending to be socialist, introduced a [illegible]

Monty Python's 11th flings . . . ' is how Mick Farren describes this IT front page headline – "Screwing Causes Clap!" (IT, November 5-19, 1970)

NUDE WOMAN, LONDON PIGS & REBEL MUSICIAN

MULTIPLE [illegible]

Nude Woman, London Pigs & Rebel Musician – Multiple L.S.D. – Rape Suicide Bid' – tongue-in-cheek headline following an incident involving members of the Pink Fairies and MC5 and a naked New Zealand woman at the Speakeasy (IT, August 13-27, 1970)

part two

Pink Fairies Fly!

It was a very different Britain that the Deviants returned to in February 1970. No less because of decimalisation, which had been introduced while the band was away. Paul Rudolph got held up because of unforeseen currency problems, and Boss Goodman had difficulties of his own on arrival at Manchester Airport. According to Russell, Boss became "apoplectic" when handed a new fifty pence coin as change instead of an old style ten shilling note. It wasn't just the currency that was different; the country itself was undergoing a number of political upheavals. The unions and government were on the verge of breaking point with one another, and the Labour government would shortly give way to the Conservatives under the leadership of Edward Heath. Sectarian troubles in Northern Ireland were escalating, and the bombs of the Angry Brigade were about to hit the headlines. This backdrop of political turmoil marks the beginning of the Pink Fairies' defining era.

Mick was still reeling over Twink's treachery, and what amounted to a second major betrayal within several months. He undertook a number of interviews in the music press in order to promote *Mona,* and talked candidly about his split from the other Deviants in Canada. He also unveiled details of his and Steve Took's new band, Shagrat (a name taken from a Tolkien character in *Lord of the Rings,* Shagrat the Vagrant, and one that Took had assumed for his role on the *Mona* album). In an interview for *Melody Maker* in February 1970, Mick outlined the Shagrat manifesto: "I don't believe that a kid from Accrington, on a Saturday night, is really into going to listen to the Soft Machine, just as he doesn't listen to Roland Kirk. What we really need is a band that everyone can go and fall about to, rather than heavy intellectual exercises all the time." Warming to his favourite themes of rock music and revolution, he continued: "We're talking about the revolution, which is the ability to get stoned and laid without anybody bothering you too much . . . provided you have a certain responsibility with it."

Stressing the need for divergence within the scene, Mick suggested he'd like Shagrat to be where Geno Washington was two years previously, and concluded, "In fact you might say that FUN is the key word."

Speaking of his departure from the Deviants, Mick avoided the old cliche of musical differences. "Instrumentalists have this pressure of competition today far more than singers," he says in the interview, "and in

the States you're judged in the context of Jimmy Page. I'd rather be judged in the context of Wild Man Fischer, because Robert Plant I'm not."

Altghough it was possible they would be working again with some of the musicians on *Mona,* Twink certainly didn't figure in Mick and Took's future plans for Shagrat. In truth there was uncertainty about who would augment the line up. The criteria was for "people who are really excellent but are also into the trip of having fun and enjoying themselves."

If Mick really did have pre-conceived ideas about *Mona* getting him on *Top of the Pops,* then, sadly, he would have been deluding himself, and such delusions would have been shattered with the reaction of the mainstream music press and even the underground press. Richard Williams for *Melody Maker* was moved to say: "[I]t's difficult to find anything nice to say about this record." Williams acceded that it sounded like Frank Zappa at times, albeit a poorer, less funny imitation. Similarly, he was not impressed with the rock'n'roll covers: "I find much of this album slapdash and uninspired but without the simplicity and spirit which characterised the originals. Mick's motives are too complex to make it work." In their monthly LP supplement a few weeks later, *Melody Maker* drove the point home in stating that *Mona* comprised, "Badly played rock'n'roll interspersed with documentary type interviews with Hell's Angels. One for sociologists." *Beat Instrumental* was just plain confused: "It's difficult to know how much to take this album seriously. 'I *don't understand what's going on,'* says one of the numbers, to which one is tempted to nod assent." Even Mick's old buddy Miles wasn't entirely sure what to make of it, but said it all when he afforded *Mona* a full page in *IT* beneath the title "A Record Review Of Sorts."

In that same issue of *IT,* Mick made a scathing attack on the ruling elite, or "fat rich honkeys." In the article Mick advocated revolution by any means necessary, while decrying self congratulatory gestures of striking a blow for freedom "everytime you have a fuck or smoke a joint." "Getting stoned, drunk, or laid is maybe the aim of the revolution, but it is not the sole means to achieve it," he continued. "If it was, Ladbroke Grove would be a free state." The main function of rock'n'roll as revolutionary media was one of propaganda. Mick's message was the importance of music in the struggle and the need to retain its potency; avoid it being co-opted and

repackaged by the establishment marketing men. Aware of the inherent contradictions in being a revolutionary rock musician, he wrote: “The rock musician who goes seriously into the idea of revolutionary tactics is immediately confronted with a whole bag of moral problems. If you are going to be effective it is likely that you will also be a commercial success which presents the temptation to make continued commerciality the reason for working.” But Mick never had to face the dilemma of what he would do in such circumstances, because *Mona* failed to reap any commercial rewards, let alone critical plaudits.

It would be many years before *Mona* gained any kind of respect. In a *Vox* review from 1992 it was awarded nine stars out of ten by Edwin Pouncey, who considered it a neglected classic of its time, and likened the “yawning gap” between the opening and closing Mona variations as “a twisted Jerry Cornelius style yarn.” He went on to say: “Years later this thing still sounds overpowering and deadly dangerous — an ugly, crazy record that even features a depraved seven-minute-plus cello solo.”

The poor critical reaction to *Mona* came as a hard blow to Mick, and served to bruise his frazzled ego yet further. He was now ingesting LSD on a regular basis with Steve Took. After one particularly heavy trip, in which he spent the night locked in a bathroom playing *Mona* over and over, inwardly reflecting on its lack of critical acclaim, he came to the conclusion that he hated the record and decided to quit performing music for good. Mick had given it his best shot and still nobody understood him; he had been thwarted at every turn, and even his so called friends and fellow band mates had shafted him. Twice.

In addition to the west coast musical influences that Rudolph had already begun to introduce, the Deviants drew further upon their experiences in California, a style they consolidated with two drummers, following the pattern of the Grateful Dead. According to Russell, Twink had less interest in the idea of two drummers than is generally believed, and maintains that he was only in the band because Twink didn’t know how to get rid of him. “Twink wanted to graft himself onto the band,” Russell states on the sleeve notes to *Mandies and Mescaline Round at Uncle Harry’s,* “and would have been quite happy if I wasn’t in it.” Twink remembers things differently, saying that the original intention was for him

to be the lead singer in his own right. But after Russell's drum kit was impounded for several weeks following the band's return from Canada, it was necessary for him to fulfil the role of drummer until Russell got his own kit back, which wasn't until the Pink Fairies' first gig in early April 1970.

Despite the shift towards serious musicianship, the Deviants remained an underground band first and foremost. If the radical posturing that had characterised Mick's leadership of the Deviants was largely redundant following his departure, the new Pink Fairies retained a social conscience, and were far too steeped in the ethos of the counterculture to abandon their underground credentials entirely. Even if other members of the band hadn't been as politically aware as Mick, they had a vested interest in their community. With no record company, agency, or established managerial framework, Pink Fairies Mark II promoted the idea that they were a "real community band," in many cases being willing to play for free as long as they received expenses.

Graffiti began to appear on walls and hoardings around the Ladbroke Grove area. The first Pink Fairies article in *Friends* opened with a reference to it: "The Pink Fairies are expecting to fly this summer." Similarly, *Melody Maker* observed: "On a wall in Ladbroke Grove, Notting Hill, is scrawled the chalky legend: 'PINK FAIRIES FLY.'"

This soon became a Pink Fairies catchphrase, and was sporadically resurrected throughout Twink's tenure in the band. At a motorway service station on the outskirts of Newcastle, it nearly got the band arrested when Twink sprayed the legend in six foot high dayglo pink letters up the side of the building and in an outside lavatory.

It was one thing orchestrating a graffiti campaign to raise the band's profile, but quite another thing to be able to back it up. Upon their return to England, the band began to develop the set they had experimented with in America and Canada, fine tuning songs such as Uncle Harry's Last Freak Out, with a few cover versions, such as Tomorrow Never Knows by the Beatles, and Three Fifths Of A Mile In Ten Seconds by Jefferson Airplane. By early April they were ready to play their first gig.

There is some disagreement over the date and venue of the first Pink Fairies gig, which sported the line up of Russell Hunter, Paul Rudolph, Duncan Sanderson and Twink, but it is generally accepted that it took place at the Roundhouse in Chalk Farm on Sunday, April 5, 1970. Slotted between Patto, White Trash and Siren, accounts suggest they were billed as the Electric Pink Fairies and their set preceded by rapturous applause before a single note had even been played. Such was the notoriety of the name "Pink Fairies." It gained more notoriety when a fortnight later the Pink Fairies gatecrashed an Edgar Broughton gig at the Temple, formerly the old Pink Flamingo club sited on Wardour Street. The Temple had a reputation for being one of the seediest venues on the London circuit and according to John Platt in *The History of Rock,* "attracted a clientele to match its sordid decor: acid casualties, speed freaks, shysters and thieves."

The official bill at the Temple on the evening of April 18, 1970, was the Edgar Broughton Band, Arcadium and Creepy John Thomas. It might otherwise have been a routine gig for the Edgar Broughton Band had the Pink Fairies not sabotaged it, thus upstaging them in the process.

In continuing the tradition of guerrilla gigs that went right back to the preSocial Deviants days of Cat Row Foundation at the Artesian Well, through Mick's advocacy of spontaneous street happenings with the Deviants, and the chaos of PFMGDC, the new Pink Fairies laid their cards on the table from the outset. They created a name for themselves, and throughout the spring played gigs on the regular London area circuit, occasionally billed by promoters as "Twink + Deviants = Pink Fairies," to capitalise on previous reputations.

Notable for being the first time the Grateful Dead played in the UK and also for making Mungo Jerry into overnight stars, the Hollywood Festival, held near Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, took place over the weekend of May 23-24. The line up boasted a galaxy of stars that included Family, Traffic, Ginger Baker's Airforce, Black Sabbath, Colosseum and Free, and this was reflected in the cost of a ticket being a hefty fifty shillings.

What the Fairies planned was as much a protest against the high ticket prices as wanting to make their mark at the British debut of the Grateful Dead. They intended to set up and play outside the perimeter fence on a

flat-bed truck, but after receiving threats of violence thought better of it. They set their sights instead on another major festival, the Bath Festival of Blues and Progressive Music the following month. It was the second of the Bath festivals and it boasted heavyweights, such as Pink Floyd, Jefferson Airplane and Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention, with a headlining appearance by Led Zeppelin. It is particularly significant here because it was the Pink Fairies' first appearance at a festival (albeit an unscheduled one), and also the first time that Pink Fairies and Hawkwind played together, giving birth to a pairing that came to be known as Pinkwind.

In their first interview for *Friends,* the Fairies outlined their intentions: "When the major bands [finish] the evening concerts at the Bath Festival the Fairies will set up on a flat-bed truck with their own generator, and then the people's concert will begin, outside the fenced-off festival area. The band will play for the campers, those who don't want to go home, and any others who want to keep going after the main PA is switched off."

Unlike Hollywood, the Pink Fairies did make the gig. Their impromptu stage was an Avis hire lorry courtesy of Pete Currie, who was working for *IT* and had managed to secure the concession to do the trucking for the festival. Currie was the manager of an alternative morris dancing troupe known as the Blackheath Foot and Death Men, who were famous for wearing black costumes, and included the Hell's Angels amongst their number. "Pete slipped us a flat-bed truck on the side of his operation," recalls Boss Goodman, "so somehow we got a generator and were in a little field on a hill overlooking the Bath Festival, and we got our scene going up there, with all these hippies, and the Pink Fairies on a flat-bed truck, and then Doug Smith approaches me never met him before that .'Do you mind if my group can get up and play?' We were only too relieved to let somebody else get up there and have a bash, and that was the first time we met Hawkwind."

Hawkwind's Nik Turner was aware of Mick Farren and the Deviants from his frequent trips to London to pick up "psychedelic paraphernalia" that he would then sell back in Margate. He would use these sojourns to the capital to make the most of the burgeoning underground scene, by visiting the *IT* offices, and going to all-nighters. Nik used to get his posters from

Mac McDonnell, former Deviants bassist, but it was at Bath that he got to know the Pink Fairies.

Having established their own festival outside the confines of the main event, the Pink Fairies achieved their purpose of protesting against the high entrance fee, but more crucially had linked up with kindred spirits Hawkwind, with whom they would establish a close friendship and working relationship over the next two years. Boss Goodman describes how the Pinkwind situation developed: "Lots of people started booking us together, and so we'd turn up in different towns and posters would say THE PINK FAIRIES supported by Hawkwind, or HAWKWIND supported by Pink Fairies, depending on the promoter's favourite." "We used to do gigs where we'd take it in turns to headline," says Nik Turner.

The bands were equal running partners, although Boss suggests that until Hawkwind achieved chart success with Silver Machine, the Pink Fairies were "certainly the bigger name of the two." Says Boss: "We used to outplay them everywhere we went. . . . If Dave Brock is really honest . . . then he would say, 'Yeah, the Fairies would blow us off the stage most nights of the week', and we did, and there's no doubt about that!" "I don't know," says Nik Turner, "it's a matter of opinion really . . . if everyone enjoyed the whole thing then I didn't care really."

It is surprising their paths hadn't crossed sooner, both bands being based around the Ladbroke Grove area of London, and both having common aims, ideals and goals. Musically, they were quite different: Hawkwind were spacey and experimental, whereas the Fairies, by their own admission, were a more straightforward rock band, albeit with an anarchic, psychedelic twist. *Friends* was not far off the mark when it said: "Hawkwind 'are far more into thinking their music than being it' (their nearest partners in the musical revolution, the Pink Fairies, take the opposite but complementary role)." Hawkwind were responsible for bringing the "space rock," while the Pink Fairies provided the party atmosphere by adding a touch of "cosmic boogie," as Paul Rudolph once described their music. Promoters and audiences alike benefited from Pinkwind events, and everyone had the best of both worlds when the two bands jammed together after completing their regular sets. "Three drummers going fucking potty, and everybody giving it

load of loads!” Boss wistfully concludes. “It was a fucking noise. It was a fucking huge noise really!”

This and next image: Oz, the English underground press equivalent of a Fabulous Furry Freak Brother. The subject of the cartoons frequently deals with counterculture pastimes, like music, or drugs (Cartoons by Edward Barker)

part three

Festival Fever!

Following his decision to quit playing rock’n’roll altogether, Mick Farren returned full time to writing for *IT*. Despite David Hall being in charge, Mick was taking greater control of the day to day running of *IT* affairs, having helped steer the paper through its troubles with the London Street Commune. Eventually Mick became editor in his own right, bringing to *IT* his own inimitable style of revolutionary polemicism, with an emphasis on sex, dope, rock’n’roll and fucking in the streets.

But first the paper had another legal battle to tend to, having been busted for running gay contact ads. These ads were one of the main sources of income for *IT*. Faced with the cost of fighting a Crown prosecution, the underground press rallied around in a show of solidarity, and solicited collections, benefit gigs and the like.

Mick not only saw an opportunity to stage a fundraiser for *IT,* but also the opportunity to hold a festival "run for freaks, by freaks, without too much capital." The festival was called Phun City and would promote Britain's own underground talent, as well as including some of the brighter luminaries of the American counterculture. Mick had pulled off a coup in securing Detroit's revolutionary MC5 for the event (it also happened to be their first ever visit to Europe) as well as one of his all time literary heroes, William Burroughs. The list of homegrown talent included Free, Formerly Fat Harry, Mighty Baby, Linda Lewis, Mungo Jerry, Edgar Broughton Band, those old perennials the Pretty Things, and also the Pink Fairies.

Mick was over any recriminations he had with his former band mates, and was back on friendly terms with most everyone. Today, when asked about his relationship with the others on their return from Canada, Mick pragmatically replies:

> *We carried on. I mean, we were in the same fucking trench, in the same fucking fight. We had to get along. By the time they got back, I'd finished mixing* Mona. *I wasn't in an outward decline, so honour was intact. I remember when I heard they were back, I went over to where Boss was staying and we smoked* a *lot of dope and drank* a *bunch of beers and decided we better just brazen it out like it was all for the best. Communicating with Rudolph was never viable and you can't stay too mad at Russell and Sandy for very long. Twink, on the other hand, was the exception.*

Old friendships renewed, Mick set about the task of putting on Phun City. A week before the festival was due to take place on the weekend of July 24, 1970, Worthing Council sought an injunction, causing major backers to withdraw financial support. The injunction was dropped, and Ronan O'Rahilly, the Irish media entrepreneur and pirate radio pioneer, stepped in on the proviso that his company, Mid Atlantic Films, would be guaranteed the film and television rights to the whole weekend. The festival may have been on again, but the legal wrangling and other delays had put the organisation at least forty eight hours behind schedule with just three days left in which to prepare the site and meet the necessary requirements laid out by the police and the local council.

The site crew included the ever redoubtable Boss Goodman, Mac McDonnell, Kevin Buckley (one of Boss's Gang from Goodmayes), Howard Parker (aka "H," DJ at the Speakeasy and ex-Jimi Hendrix roadie), and Gez Cox (an old school friend of Mick Farren's from Worthing High School). They were assisted by a significant number of hippies, who were already starting to arrive on the site a week before the festival was due to take place and had set up camp in a tract of nearby woodland.

Boss Goodman's heroic effort to relocate the stage is the stuff of legend. High voltage overhead power lines meant that the stage faced the potential risk of electrocution and would have to be moved. Boss recalled for *Days In The Life:*

> *This little guy who put the stage together couldn't believe it — the thought of dismantling it all. But I said 'No, man, we'll carry it' and he said 'Impossible' and I said 'Rubbish. We'll get all the hippies out of the woods and we'll go 1 -2-3 and lift and we'll carry the fucker and put it over there.' So we argued and he said 'Go on then, fucking do it!' So I got my gang and we went into the woods where there was at least fifty hippies camped out. And I said 'Look, I don't know whether you can bear it or not, but can you do us all a favour, the stage has been put in the wrong place, we've got to move it. They say it can't be done.' So everybody goes 'Let's go'. And I go '1 -2-3', the fucking hippies lift the stage and we carry it, 100 yards across the field.*

By Friday evening the stage was ready and there was now sound, lighting equipment and generators. There was also water after a sympathetic local councillor guaranteed payment to the local water board when a cheque from Ronan O'Rahilly was refused. There wasn't time to erect gates, fences or turnstiles, however, and the organisers had no option but to declare Phun City a free festival and put their trust in the goodwill of the audience to make donations.

The bands were due to start arriving on site at anytime, and would not have been aware of this development. As opposed to the arranged fee, they would now only receive a nominal fee, if anything at all, towards their

expenses. Surprisingly nearly all of the bands that turned up took the news in good spirit and agreed to play for free — all except for Free, who refused to play at all.

The Pink Fairies received their share of plaudits, and the finale of their show, in which the two drummers, Twink and Russell Hunter, stripped naked and cavorted with each other inevitably elevated the profile and notoriety of the band, and firmly cemented their growing reputation as underground favourites. In a report entitled "Not much Phun at this City," Allen Evans wrote in *New Musical Express:* "Pink Fairies were pounding out music from about 7pm to 8.30, finally getting all the grass squatters (about 5,000 at the time) to jump up in unison as the vocalist shouted, *'We love, we love.'* Good clean exercise."

Evans was similarly receptive to the Edgar Broughton Band, who had been joined by Kevin Ayers and the Whole World for a ninety minute set. But, if Evans was reasonably impressed with the cream of British underground rock, he seemed less sure what all the fuss was about with regard to the MC5. "Now the MC5 who are alleged to favour revolution for America, were trying to wake us all up — at near midnight when most were blanketed down for the night," wrote Evans. "They really tried hard with several ravers, but the tiny applause they got must have showed them they weren't all that acceptable. They must have wondered if their journey was really necessary."

Predictably, the underground press was wowed by MC5's performance, and *IT* called it "a truly amazing set." A Manchester based underground newspaper *Grass Eye* said: "Until you actually see the MC5 live it's impossible to guess at the energy they send out in their music . . . it's not until you see them doing it that you realise what an amazing band they are." Steve Mann, one time underground press writer and friend of the Deviants and Pink Fairies, told Jonathon Green: "Phun City was magnificent: It made everything worthwhile. When the MC5 came on stage, Wayne Kramer machine-gunning the audience, Micky was crying, I was crying, everybody was crying. It was wonderful."

It was probably around this time that "Cosmic Family" began to be used as a term to describe the Deviants/Pink Fairies axis, and their immediate friends and associates within the Ladbroke Grove scene and wider

underground. Hawkwind, with their various ties over the years, were a part of the Cosmic Family. But Hawkwind were conspicuous by their absence at Phun City. They certainly didn't appear on any of the posters. A report in *Friends* suggests they had turned up with the intention of playing but were too incapacitated to get it together, which *Friends* attributed to their "monumental dope consumption."

Nik Turner is vague on Hawkwind's involvement at Phun City, but does recall being there in some kind of organisational capacity.

It would not be until the Isle of Wight Festival at the end of August 1970 that the Pinkwind alliance had the opportunity to consolidate and pick up where it had left off at the Bath Festival.

Twink recalls that the MC5 were left stranded in the UK after Phun City. Mick Farren says otherwise:

> *The MC5 weren't exactly stranded. They had return tickets and Ronan O'Rahilly was paying hotel and per diem, and there was* a *cash gig at the Roundhouse* a *week after Phun City. Also H [Howard Parker] was hired out to look out for them. In the ensuing time, though, they made* a *management — kinda — deal with Ronan and then started shuttling back and forth between London and Detroit, playing gigs with the likes of the Pink Fairies, and also cutting the soundtrack to this movie* Gold *that Ronan was producing.*

Soon after the Phun City festival the MC5 played a gig at the Speakeasy. Twink had been banned from the Speakeasy for bad behaviour and non payment of a bar tab, but was smuggled into the venue inside a bass drum case. Twink stripped naked and jumped on stage with the MC5, much to the anger of the management, with whom Twink was already *persona non grata.* Roadie Joly McFie remembers that "halfway through the MC5 set Twink appeared dreamily from the stage, naked except for his boots and tall hat, adding to the sense of chaos." Once again, Twink was unceremoniously ejected from the club, but his impromptu strip was only one incident in a long evening of consternation.

Earlier in the day, a barmaid working at the hotel in which the MC5 were staying met the band, took some speed and LSD, and demanded to be taken to the Speakeasy. Unfortunately, the LSD had an adverse affect and pretty soon the woman began to freak out. Joly recalls: “After the band had finished we became aware of a ruckus in the ladies room. This girl was in there freaking out, naked. She had turned all the taps on, and Luigi or whoever it was that ran the Speak was freaking out over the flooding. Somehow we knew that she was associated with the band and was thus our responsibility.” Sandy picks up the story: “Luigi said, ’If you don’t get her out of here I’m calling the police,’ and we thought ’Well we don’t want that!’ so we put her in Joly’s car and we drove down Regent Street.” The woman proved difficult to control and she ended up on her back with her head blocking the gear stick, leaving Joly stuck in third gear unable to change. “Every light seemed to be red,” says Joly, “and I was having to crawl away using the clutch.”

In her amphetamine and lysergic induced frenzy the woman demanded sex and/or to be in water. Eventually they made it to Regent’s Park and she jumped into the canal. Sandy and Joly sat on the bank to make sure she didn’t drown, whereupon the police arrived, coaxed the girl from the canal and took her away. With tongue firmly in cheek, *IT* reported the incident under one of its more salacious headlines of the time: “Nude Woman, London Pigs & Rebel Musician — Multiple LSD — Rape Suicide Bid.”

Flush with the money to pay his outstanding bar tab of £6, Twink returned to the Speakeasy and was promptly beaten up by the doormen still smarting from his naked antics, not to mention the adverse publicity received when the story was splashed across the cover of *IT.*

With Mick Farren firmly at the helm, by late 1970 *IT* was more anti-establishment than it had ever been, and had adopted a more consistently revolutionary stance. Although the political beliefs of the editorial team and writers went some way towards explaining this, there were changes within the wider underground itself.

In addition to the revolutionary polemic, *IT* was promoting an irreverent, but also provocative, cocktail of sex, drugs and rock’n’roll, and the newspaper increasingly began to satirise the more sensational excesses of tabloid journalism by running its own equally, if not more, excessive

headlines, thus increasing its own circulation figures in the process. “Screwing Causes Clap,” was a particular favourite of Mick’s. “My kick was to see *IT* on the newstands right next to *Playboy* and the *Daily Express,”* says Mick. “The day the issue with the parody tabloid cover and the banner SCREWING CAUSES CLAP went on sale was one of the happiest of my life. There it was, bold as brass, on the stands right by Oxford Circus tube station. Total absurdist street theatre, and a magazine as well — Monty Python with fangs.”

> *IT* still covered social and political injustices and other “right on” causes, but there was a greater emphasis on underground cartoons too. Making the most of the Underground Press Syndicate, *IT* was able to reprint the work of some of the American counterculture’s finest cartoonists — Robert Crumb, Skip Williams and Spain Rodriguez to name a few. Gilbert Shelton and Paul Mavrides’s *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* was a particular favourite, whilst a Gilbert Shelton strip featuring his comic creation Wonder Warthog, in a strip about the Pigs from Uranus, would inspire the title and lyric to one of the tracks on the Fairies’ second album.

IT provided a home to any manner of Edward Barker’s anthropomorphic creations, such as the Largactalites, indefinable cone shaped entities that frequently said “Meep” and little else. Edward was briefly commissioned to provide the Largactalites cartoon to the *Observer* newspaper until complaints from readers pointed out that Largactil was a drug used to treat mental illness. Changing the name of the cartoon to The Galactilites, Edward was then paid off by the newspaper when he submitted a four-frame strip consisting of just four horizon lines.

Some of Edward’s most celebrated creations were his crows, and Mick Farren and Boss found themselves the basis of these on more than one occasion. (Boss is said to have been the inspiration for the famous crow logo used by Dingwalls in the 1970s and 1980s.)

Edward produced cartoons for the underground press, as well as the *NME,* throughout the seventies. Being a close member of the Cosmic Family, he also provided the artwork for a number of Pink Fairies records

over the years. After a small collection of his work was published in 1991 under the title *A Murder of Crows,* he contributed to the Pink Fairies *UHCK* fanzine, before dying of heart failure in 1997. Describing Edward's work as "a satire of the dog days of the era in which he found himself," Roger Hutchinson wrote in his *Guardian* obituary for the cartoonist: "Barker created a world in which flea-bitten hippies exchanged hangover insults with dustmen in the early morning streets, where messed-up, half-dead rock bands lurched from gig to gig, where the flowery optimism of 1967's Summer of Love had degenerated into scattered dysfunctional bands of squatters using recreational drugs. Any recreational drugs." None of his creations epitomised this more than "Om," who could have been any of the Pink Fairies, depicting as it did the average Ladbroke Grove freak.

The Pink Fairies had earned something of a reputation as a community band in Ladbroke Grove, and throughout the summer of 1970 continued to build up their reputation as a people's band. On August 22 they performed for Pig Of The Month, an open air demonstration in Trafalgar Square. (It was not the first time that Sandy and Russell had played Trafalgar Square; they had done so two years previously as the Deviants, fronted by Mick Farren.) The organisers intended to address the various injustices happening within their communities that were usually ignored or distorted by the mass media. One such injustice was an increase in the number of busts in Notting Hill, Islington and the East End, "particularly involving blacks and kids who have dropped out of a system that condemns them to meaningless dead end jobs," reported

Friends. Friends reported how the likes of Amsterdam Kabouter Franz van Mahony and a number of other speakers generally warned against apathy and predictably advocated "screwing the system."

Mick Farren, now a speaker rather than a singer, rushed around shouting, "Methedrine is great at riots," and addressed the crowd with revolutionary rhetoric. "Everything's all yours by right," Farren told the Trafalgar Square masses. "Everybody should have a coloured TV, we was robbed even before we was born, things are made by the people, they belong to the people, so the people should take them."

The following day the Pink Fairies were billed alongside Elton John, Quiver and Noir for a *Friends* benefit at the Roundhouse in Chalk Farm,

which was the last gig they played before heading down to the south coast and over to the Isle of Wight.

The third annual Isle of Wight festival was held at Afton Down, near Ryde, on the August bank holiday weekend of 1970. It has become a landmark in the history of popular culture, not least because of the sheer volume of people in attendance: in excess of 600,000, the largest number ever to attend a festival in the UK. It also proved to be Jimi Hendrix's last major gig before he died, and was the scene of a pitched battle when security faced an alliance of continental anarchists, British Hell's Angels and disaffected hippies and freaks, angered by conditions at the festival site and the high admission charged by commercial ventures in general.

Inevitably, the Cosmic Family were in the thick of things. Mick Farren was a prime mover in instigating circumstances that eventually led to the fences coming down, whilst the Pink Fairies established an alternative free festival outside the perimeter of the main arena. In his autobiography, Mick says that he could see the festival being "a black hole of decidedly negative energy, and it was time to salvage whatever we could." In their capacity as *IT* journalists, Mick Farren and Gez Cox had scouted the festival site in advance and realised the potential for causing disruption and aggravation for the promoters. Not wanting to implicate *IT,* Mick adopted the White Panthers name in order to highlight the shortcomings in the security preparations, as well as encourage those without tickets to turn up and watch the festival for free from the huge escarpment that overlooked the site. This vantage point became known as Desolation Row after the Bob Dylan song, or bowdlerised by the underground press to "Devastation Hill." Both were suitable monikers anyway, considering the chaos that ensued.

The Pink Fairies did their bit with Hawkwind and continued the tradition they had established at Bath Festival, and played together outside the confines of the main arena. Having unsuccessfully "hustled" Rikki Farr, the festival promoter, for a gig on the main stage, Hawkwind set up their equipment outside the event and played in an inflatable tent called Canvas City. The Pink Fairies arrived the following afternoon, camped next to Hawkwind, set up their equipment outside Canvas City, and embarked on a legendary Pinkwind jam. When the bands discovered that Canvas City had increased its admission fee to ten shillings, they played in the tent that

evening on the condition that any money owing to them would be spent on distributing food to those festival goers that needed it. While the owner did distribute free food, it was only to those who had paid to get in the tent, and, disgruntled, the bands switched to the Fairground Tent, where the obliging owner not only charged a lesser entrance fee, but also spiked everyone's coffee.

By most accounts, the session on Saturday afternoon proved to be brilliant and continued for hours. *Friends* wrote: "Everyone and everything is in full participation, with the whole thing becoming like an unstoppable monster . . . everyone has a good freak and expounds potential energy."

When word of the alternative event on Devastation Hill spread, other musicians came along to watch and sometimes join in with Pinkwind. Jimi Hendrix was amongst those who visited, but he didn't join in. "I went to invite him to play with us," says Nik Turner, "but I ran into his road manager who said he was a bit fucked. . . . Miles Davis came along as well. . . . Santana and a lot of other people that were playing at the festival came and checked us out." Hendrix dedicated one of the songs from his set to Nik Turner that night. ("This next one's for the cat with the silver face.")

While the Pink Fairies and Hawkwind were getting it on for the benefit of those on Devastation Hill, Mick Farren's White Panthers continued to voice their dissatisfaction at the intolerable conditions of the main festival, and the impositions made by the promoters, Fiery Creations.

Mick and the White Panthers took advantage of the makeshift printing facilities *Friends* had brought with them in order to produce an alternative festival newssheet called *Freek Press.* On Saturday, *Freek Press* ran a statement by the White Panthers that determined the responsibility of Fiery Creations should be "for the physical support of the people," and not to protect Fiery Creations' property by increasing security against the escalating "anger of the people," which had been incurred by its own actions. In typical Marxist-Leninist rhetoric it continued: "We have to make the bands on stage aware of it [the anger] also. Performers are on that stage because, & *only* because, of the people." It went on to suggest how the major food and drink suppliers at such an event could easily afford to give free food in return for the publicity generated by such a gesture. In conclusion, "if you got a good site, erected lavatories, supplied food, & told

people to come along & camp, you could have the greatest festival of all time — a festival of the people, by the people & for THE PEOPLE!!"

Things were hotting up so much that on Saturday night a number of disparate radical factions decided to try and breach the double nine foot tall galvanised fence. "In one of the many stoned alliances of the festival," stated *Friends,* "the White Panthers teamed up with Young Liberals and the Hell's Angels and made many physical assaults on fences around the arena."

Mick Farren describes flares hitting the stage, hot dog stands burning down and police helicopters circling overhead, all of which was watched over by a raggle taggle crowd on a hill like an army of medieval brigands waiting to loot a besieged city.

The festival in the Isle of Wight was situated somewhere in *Mad Max* country, halfway between the peace, love and music of Woodstock and the gore horror of Altamont.

part four

Politics and Pranks

Using the guise of the White Panther Party, Mick Farren had been instrumental in instigating dissatisfaction with the concentration style camp conditions at the 1970 Isle of Wight Festival. But what was intended only as a one off hit and run job on the festival promoters, Fiery Creations, developed into something more, and Mick and his accomplices continued operations upon their return to Ladbroke Grove. Members of the UK White Panthers adopted ranks along similar lines to the American Black Panther Party: Mick Farren was Minister of Defence, Steve Mann was Minister for Coordination, Joy Farren was Minister of Finance, and Edward Barker was Minister of Culture.

There was an element of tongue- in-cheek humour to some extent. Boss Goodman certainly was never really into the political side of things. Giving himself the title of Minister of Fun and Frolics, he recalls "we painted a letter box blue. I just mentioned it one day, and the next thing all these guys who were in [John] Carding's White Panthers came round and said 'Well, we've got all the gear Boss, let's go!' — they'd got the overalls, one of those little tents workman put round things when they're working, the blue paint, the brushes, so we chose a letter box . . . and painted it blue. For me that was being revolutionary!"

Steve Mann told Jonathon Green in 1987: "For a while we really did get into it. I think we were pretty serious at the time. It all started when John Sinclair got busted in the States. He ran the US White Panthers. . . . We didn't really do an awful lot, apart from try and cause trouble."

Things got ugly at a bonfire night party in Powis Square organised by the White Panthers, when the police arrived and started to forcibly remove revellers from the area. Several people, including Mick Farren and Steve Mann, were arrested on charges ranging from the use of obscene language to throwing a firework at a police officer. Says Steve: "We fought the case and Micky and I both got off because we convinced the magistrate that while there had only been one banger, which they accepted, then it was totally impossible for two people to physically coordinate themselves to throw [it]."

If the British Panthers were primarily a means of making mischief, on a practical level they also established neighbourhood councils, organised free

food programmes and soup kitchens, and distributed blankets amongst “the Grove” hippies.

The legacy of the American Panthers struck a chord for some people in the politically turbulent era of Britain in the early 1970s. White Panther groups, or chapters, began to spring up all over the country, most notably in Manchester, Glasgow and Exeter. There were several chapters around the London area, including West London, Abbey Wood, Ilford and Greenwich. Interviewed by Jonathon Green, Mick Farren recalls: “We formed the White Panther Party to do something, I don’t know what. . . . People want a name, post-hippies out of money wandering round wondering what had happened to flower power and walking around in worn-out velvet pants. Furious amounts of drugs — people were shooting heroin by then. Posthippy junkies.”

With regards to its national growth, Mick stresses of the White Panther Party: “I was hardly involved at all. I’d show up and talk — or there’d be a gig or party organised — but let’s not forget that, on a day by day basis, Edward, Joy and I had to put out *IT* and *Nasty Tales,* Boss was running the Fairies. We had our plates more than full and the White Panthers could do what they wanted. That was the fun of it.” Despite his surprise at how the White Panthers took off, Mick is not oblivious to the fact that “the line between prank and serious is very fine and sometimes invisible.”

As editor of *IT,* Mick provided ample coverage of the activities of the White Panthers. John Carding of the Abbey Wood chapter frequently espoused radical rhetoric in a ten point programme based on the Marxist-Leninist version of the American Black Panther Party’s own programme. “They were very serious cats,” says Mick of Abbey Wood, “like Marxists who’d taken acid.”

Point Ten was one of the most fundamental points and it called for freedom: “We want a free planet. We want a free land: Free food: Free shelter: Free Clothing: Free music and free culture: Free media: Free technology: Free education: Free health care: Free bodies: Free people: Free tenant space: Everything free for everybody.”

Point Seven was more realistic and championed environmental causes: “We want a clean planet and a healthy people. . . . We want to restore the

ecological balance of the planet and secure the future of humanity and its environs." Such views were largely seen as the preserve of a few crackpot lefties or "far out" hippies. Today, the environment is an integral part of the mainstream political agenda, over which elections are fought and won.

As well as the White Panthers, Mick Farren was linked to another American radical underground group when Yippie spokesman Jerry Rubin, and his cohorts Stewart Albert and Brian Flanagan, paid a flying visit to the UK. The purpose of the visit was to forge closer links between the American Youth International Party (Yippie) and British underground groups, and to cause a little mayhem at the same time. Booked to appear on *The David Frost Show*, the underground cognoscenti set in motion the wheels of disruption. Alongside the three American yippies were representatives of the British underground, notably Richard Neville and Felix Dennis from *Oz*, Alan Marcuson and Jerome Burn from *Friends*, and Mick Farren, Paul Lewis and Steve Mann from *IT*. Boss made up numbers for the Cosmic Family. A loose plan was formulated in which the assembly would invade the stage on cue of Rubin sparking a joint up in front of Frost. Preceded by much badinage between Frost and Rubin, and a confrontation between Mick and so called behaviourist expert Robert Ardrey, the cue was given and the hippies ambled noisily onto the stage whilst Felix Dennis squirted Frost with a water pistol. The programme was pulled off air, and the rabble made good their escape under cover of a smoke flare.

Rubin flew to Belfast later that week where he expressed solidarity with the Irish Republican cause, and flouted a home office directive that stated he couldn't stay for more than seven days. Hours after his visa expired he was arrested by Special Branch and deported.

Suggesting as much in 1970, Mick believes that to some extent the Frost programme makers set the yippies up as a publicity stunt. But his cynicism also extends to Rubin himself as well as Richard Neville, who was in cahoots with the publisher of Rubin's latest book *Do It!*

In "Frost and Benn The Flowerpot Men," an unpublished chapter from *Give The Anarchist A Cigarette,* Mick states that his "primary motive for going on the *Frost Show* was not to expand the consciousness of the viewing public, but simply to pull off a prank that might at least bring a

smile to those who were still trying to hold on to some tatters of revolt." He continues:

> *Thus far into the new decade, they'd had precious little to laugh at. The* Frost Show *was showbusiness for Chrissakes. We weren't blowing up Parliament, dragging aristos to the guillotine, or hanging merchant bankers from lampposts. All we did was change the format of the bloody* David Frost Show *for a few minutes, just as Jimi Hendrix had bucked the rules on* The Lulu Show *when he insisted on playing Sunshine Of Your Love instead of the mandated Hey Joe, and was also cut off for his temerity.*

part five

Underground Rivalry

Not unlike Mick Farren and Jerry Rubin, the close relationship forged between the Pink Fairies and Hawkwind suggests a united front existing between the so called community bands. It is true that in the case of Phun

City most of the bands turned up and rallied around in the "spirit of the underground" and played for expenses. But petty hostilities lurked beneath the surface waiting to manifest themselves. Revolving generally around the issue of "bread" or "underground credentials," these spats sometimes got reported in the underground press, a case in point being a dispute between the Edgar Broughton Band and the Pink Fairies.

It is possible that the root of the animosity stemmed from the time the Pink Fairies hijacked the stage at an Edgar Broughton gig at the Temple in April, and upstaged the headliners in the process. Twink, ever the one to court controversy, bragged in *Friends* how the Pink Fairies were "the band of the people . . . can't think of any others." Twink also suggested the Edgar Broughton Band were basically a hype, or a "promotional deal" as *Friends* put it. Of the Temple gig, Twink was reported as saying: "We went down before they turned up, set up and played to the waiting audience, and left them standing. When the Edgar Broughton Band came on, they didn't show any reaction at all."

Twink's comments appeared in *Friends* exactly two weeks before Phun City, at which both the Pink Fairies and Edgar Broughton were scheduled to play. Matters were exacerbated by Peter Jenner, the Edgar Broughton manager, who objected to the presence of film cameras at the event and refused to allow his band to be filmed. This in turn generated criticism from certain quarters of the underground press, and over the next few months the dispute between Peter Jenner and the Pink Fairies rumbled on. *IT* did little to help matters when they published an article called "Good Guys & Bad Guys," which listed weekend bookings on the college circuit throughout October and November, along with the average fees commanded by the bands that played them (such as the Pink Fairies and Edgar Broughton). Earning an average of £500 per weekend gig, the Broughtons fell just inside the upper bracket of fees commanded, along with Free who earned £750, Deep Purple and Family who earned between £750-£1,000, and Pink Floyd who were at the very top end with £1,500. At the lower end of the scale, bands like High Tide earned £65, Skin Alley £75, Hawkwind £85, and Pink Fairies between £75-£100.

"It would appear that Blackhill Enterprises are jealously guarding their reputation as purveyors of music for the people, to the extent of trying to

prevent a true community band, the Pink Fairies, from getting work," commented Steve Mann, author of "Good Guys & Bad Guys." Mann was concerned that Blackhill were losing their impetus and sight of their original underground aims. Although conceding that Blackhill were still doing a lot of good work, Mann considered how the Edgar Broughton Band, once "proudly proclaimed as a politically conscious, active community force," seemed "to be turning into just another bread-motivated rock band." Mann then revealed details of a letter allegedly sent by Peter Jenner to Stan Beiderbeck at APB International, the Pink Fairies' booking agency, about plans for a Top Rank tour featuring the Edgar Broughton Band. In it Jenner aired his displeasure about the addition of the Fairies to the bill in place of Noir, and was apparently concerned with weighting the fees in favour of his own band over the others.

The Edgar Broughton Band had for a long time mined a seam in the underground and built a reputation of espousing revolutionary ideals and playing community benefits. That it should come down to a war of words in the underground press indicates that even the counterculture was not immune from seemingly petty games of oneupmanship in the name of "right on" credibility.

Although many readers were outraged by what the article revealed, there were those who criticised the article itself. "The super non-hype, non-breadmaking, true revolutionary penny a page, rag mag strikes again," wrote one reader. "Broughton charges £500 . . . and are therefore 'just another bread-motivated rock-band'. The Pink Fairies, however, are the true revolutionaries — they show their pricks on stage, and only charge £75100 for it (why wasn't Broughton's fee put as a minimum/maximum as well? Then it would read more like £150-500)." The reader hit the nail on the head when he went on to say: "The Pink Fairies are a good band, so are the Broughtons. Both of them represent to varying degrees the freaks, the thinkers of our community — you will do fuck all by deliberately playing them off against each other."

If Mann's criticisms of Peter Jenner and Blackhill could be perceived as being biased, at least Jenner had the opportunity to have his say in *IT* too. Jenner condemned the article as "an arsehole piece of writing." He countered accusations that the Edgar Broughton Band had sold out and

explained their fees as necessary in light of timewasters who arranged gigs that left the band badly out of pocket. Jenner cited Keele University as an example, and a gig that the Broughtons were expected to play for nothing, despite having lost almost £1,000 in costs and fines (the band was charged with incitement to cause malicious damage, and aiding and abetting malicious damage after the students went on a graffiti spree).

In light of Mann's accusation about Blackhill "jealously guarding their reputation as purveyors of music for the people," Jenner admitted that such a reputation was "groovy," but continued, "we've never considered ourselves as anything like that. We are, and always have been, a commercial entity. We're an entertainment agency, a management company etc." He went on to make the point that it was pointless playing for a lesser fee when the promoter would still charge ten shillings and pocket the extra cash. He may have had a point.

On not wanting the Pink Fairies on the Top Rank tour with the Edgar Broughton Band, Jenner launched into a scathing tirade:

> *I tell you why I didn't want the Fairies. The Pink Fairies make me sick. I think they're* a very *bad group. Musically they suck . . . The more important thing is what happened at Phun City. I thought that the Pink Fairies' performance was absolutely the most nauseating thing I've ever seen . . . [doing] their naked bit for Ronan O'Rahilly's film — which was ripping everybody off — it really made me fucking throw up and I don't want anything to do with them because of that one incident. Because Phun City was really an arsehole situation. The bands got ripped off really badly Ronan wasn't making* a *film because it was groovy — he was hoping to make* a *lot of money on it. The only thing that gives O'Rahilly* a *chance of selling that film is the frontal nudity bit. So when I make a fuss about it, what happens? — I get slagged off in* IT. *At least I was sensible enough to know we were getting ripped off, the Fairies were stupid enough to go along with it.*

Twink has admitted that the naked stunt was anything but spontaneous and was instead pre-planned for the cameras. However, the film never did

see the light of day and for all the notoriety the stunt brought the Pink Fairies, it is debatable whether Ronan O'Rahilly recouped any of the money he invested in the festival or the film. (Rumour has it that the film is now in the possession of the Duke of Westminster.)

Today, Jenner only vaguely remembers the exchange of words with Steve Mann in the underground press and baulks at the idea that such feuding might have been anything more than petty rivalry. "You're all in the first division together, or in our case we were all in the third division together," Jenner says now, "and there weren't that many bands around being underground and rabble rousing, and I suppose I would be jealous of anything that they [Pink Fairies] got together, and vice versa. I think there certainly was rivalry, but that was all pretty healthy, and we were all reasonably good mates."

Sandy has no recollection of any animosity between the two bands, and says he always got on fine with the Edgar Broughton Band. Similarly, Twink can remember no ill feeling between rival band members: "There was nothing going on between the band members. I was friendly with the Broughtons, and they were friendly with us, but I think the management do these kind of things for whatever reason."

Jamie Mandelkau puts the situation between Jenner and *IT* down to "more bullshit from the scene," and intimates that the Pink Fairies should have thrown their hand in with Jenner and Blackhill Enterprises at the time. However, Jenner is doubtful whether he would have signed the Pink Fairies: "I was always not quite sure whether the Fairies quite cut it [after Mick left the Deviants]. I thought Mick was the selling point . . . and I always thought that the Fairies didn't then have the focus . . . without Mick they were just another underground band."

With regard to the Fairies' equally flamboyant showman in the form of Twink, Jenner admits to being "a bit frightened of Twink — not frightened — but a bit wary. He was always like a definite guaranteed loose cannon, and although I was very underground myself, I did like things that were a bit more coherent . . . was never totally convinced that once Mick had left that the Pink Fairies really did believe what they were doing."

Pink Fairies Marching Band, Glastonbury 1971. Twink is in the top hat with bass drum (Photograph uncredited, Glastonbury Fayre LP booklet, courtesy of Tim Rundall)

Advert for Pretty Things and Pink Fairies tour, May/June 1971

part six

Uptown Ranking

As the summer of 1970 turned to autumn, Sandy began a relationship with Pamela Miller, better known as Miss Pamela from the Los Angeles group

GTOs. Frank Zappa was responsible for forming the GTOs, an all girl band comprised of real life groupies, in his drive to document "the deranged activities of a wide spectrum of Los Angeles' freak scene culture." The GTOs, Girls Together Outrageously, received a modicum of success in the US, perhaps riding off the back of Zappa's reputation, rather than because of any talent of their own.

Sandy met Miss Pamela at a "Happening" under railway arches near Waterloo. Organised by the artist Felix Topolski, Sandy reminisces: "Felix set up a scaffolding platform . . . and what his PR people did was just invite all the hippies, so it was like Nik Turner, Hawkwind and us . . . and Felix sat up the top and sketched all of us, just wandering around, drinking." Also present were other counterculture cognoscenti. "Pamela just happened to be one of those people there, being a GTO as she was, and it was one of those instant, mutual attraction things, and we were inseparable until she went back to the States."

Despite initially planning to stay for only two weeks, by the time Sandy and Miss Pamela met she had already been in the UK for several months. Better known for pursuing major league rock stars, Miss Pamela nevertheless became smitten with Sandy and they embarked on a whirlwind romance. It was doomed to fail, but while it lasted it was all good publicity for the band.

Boss says: "I think Sandy had been bowled over really, she was some terrific looking chick, and she had a reputation . . . and it was good for us as a whole really, that one of the GTOs was going out with our bass player."

In September 1970, the Pink Fairies embarked upon the Head Rock Circus tour, the final line up for which included old blues lag Alexis Korner, Pure Wings, and a young black British band called Noir. It did not include the Edgar Broughton Band; manager Jenner kept his word and withdrew them after the promoter called his bluff and refused to drop the Pink Fairies from the bill.

As joint headliners with Alexis Korner it was the Pink Fairies' first major tour, and it took in a number of Top Rank ballrooms throughout England and Wales. Top Rank had only just lifted a ban on rock bands

following an incident with the Who at one of their venues and viewed the Head Rock Circus tour as a litmus test.

"[W]e made the test breakthrough before they book the heavy boys," Twink told *Friends* (October 30, 1970).

The Top Rank circuit usually played host to doyens of easy listening artists, such as James Last and Ted Heath, and catered for the "chicken in the basket" crowd. Indeed, having joined the band for the first part of the tour, *New Musical Express* journalist Roy Carr commented: "This is a genuine attempt to bring some more progressive sounds into the sequined jacket and rapidly dating sanctum of J. Arthur's domain."

The ballrooms were unlike the venues the Fairies were used to playing, being fairly large and complemented by big stages and plush red velvet curtains that normally accommodated large orchestras. The band had trolled the country's small clubs and various festivals and benefits for the last six months, not to mention the dues they had paid as the Deviants before that, and if they weren't used to such comfortable spaces, they were less accustomed to getting regularly paid at the end of the night.

"It was kind of weird to do," says Sandy, "but it was well paid, and the facilities like the dressing rooms were better than some of the grotty dungeon like clubs that we used to do, so we quite enjoyed that."

Twink remembers the tour with less affection. "It was boring really," he says, "because nobody really knew who the bands were in most of the places, so there really wasn't much of an audience . . . I remember one gig, it was so ridiculous because there were about twenty bouncers, and the club stage had barriers to stop the audience getting to the stage, but there were only about half a dozen people there!"

Although far from the scale of a Rolling Stones gig or a Who gig, not all dates on the Head Rock Circus tour were as sparsely attended as the one Twink describes. The tour enabled the band to take their message beyond London and the Home Counties, helping raise their profile in the provinces. In *New Musical Express,* Roy Carr wrote of the first date in Preston: "Because of over-running Twink and his three Fairies only had time for a brace of rockin' originals Snake and Uncle Harry. Nevertheless, they more

than consolidated the enviable reputation they are rapidly building for themselves."

Despite peace signs being flashed by skinheads during one of the dates at least, as commented in *Friends,* the Pink Fairies generally found themselves preaching to the converted. Their basic audience was still largely "underground," Twink told *Friends.* "We'd like to see it all merge into one big thing. Meanwhile we just try to advertise our lifestyle in the best way we can. Totally. People know that with the Fairies they can do anything they like. Which is better than sitting there and being drained of all their energy. What we need is everything — freaks, not just rock or any other compartment, everything."

Sandy's relationship with Miss Pamela blossomed during the Head Rock Circus tour. She and fellow GTO band mate, Miss Renee, would occasionally join the Fairies onstage before their set, or sometimes after the encores. Continuing the tradition of singing roadie and unofficial fifth member of the band, Boss would join them on occasion too. He recalls: "I've got vague memories of the three of us — Sandy, her and I singing a doo-wop song . . . of some sort."

It was actually an old Rosie and the Originals song. Pamela wrote in her autobiography, *I'm With The Band:* "Renee and I sang Angel Baby with the Fairies all over England, and I got a taste of the glory I craved."

Reporting on a post tour gig at Ronnie Scott's, *Friends* refers to a Pink Fairies' "set that lasts and blasts for around two hours with encores and as a special attraction Miss Pamela of the GTOs and Miss Renee wander back to the gold lame days with Angel Baby."

Friends reviewed the Ronnie Scott set with enthusiasm:

> *It's* a *deceptively chaotic set. The Fairies pour out such high-grade energy that individual musicianship gets lost in the rush. There's an Airplane track featuring Twink on vocals, though like most of the songs, the music takes over, and the words get forgotten. Kosmic Rock'n'Roll flashes on, Airplane like again. Paul and Sandy sound strangely like Kaukonen and Casady at times, but the Fairies aren't playing straight acid sounds. The dope helps the energy, but doesn't create it. That's always there for everyone who wants it,*

indefatigable, inevitable, total. It may screw up your ears for a while but even if only half a *dozen people turn up it doesn't matter as long as they enjoy themselves there and afterwards.*

It was a satisfactory postscript to a tour on which all of the bands were received with varying degrees of warmth and indifference. A parting shot from Roy Carr in *New Musical Express* singled out the Pink Fairies: "With a double-drum front line and Twink's special brand of lunacy they could easily emerge as a rocking big attraction by the end of the year."

part one

New Boots and Contracts

Peter Jenner had been sufficiently piqued by the antics of the Pink Fairies to withdraw the Edgar Broughton Band from the Head Rock Circus tour, but Ronan O'Rahilly was less fazed by their behaviour. Indeed, O'Rahilly was impressed enough to take them under his wing in an unofficial capacity, and involve them in his plans to broadcast pirate television programmes from an old Constellation airplane that would circle the capital beaming down television from the skies. O'Rahilly was serious about his pirate TV plans, and Sandy remembers accompanying him to the recording of a *Parkinson* style chat show to discuss the project.

Russell Hunter remembers O'Rahilly with considerable affection: "Ronan was an amazing guy, full of amazing ideas and schemes." Says Russell:

> *He wanted to set up* a *pirate TV station that was to be broadcast from an old Lancaster Bomber flying around London in the middle of the night! We recorded* a very *old fashioned kind of* Sunday Night at the London Palladium *type TV special for this insane idea, all dancing girls and jugglers — and us! Then we were dumb*

enough to sit in front of our flickering TV sets all night trying to tune in to this broadcast! Remember, TV — all three channels of it — shut down around midnight every night. Ronan insisted that the plane was flying around, and blamed the lack of pictures on 'technical difficulties,' but with the benefit of hindsight, I'd have to admit to naivety, and take refuge in the old excuse of excessive chemical consumption. But he was an exciting guy to be around, and surrounded by off the wall figures, from actors to gangsters to assorted lunatics.

As it turned out, the pirate television project never got off the ground — literally — and the film footage of the band was not broadcast. Sandy and Russell were quite taken by O'Rahilly's Irish Blarney, and it is hardly surprising given his wit, charm and charisma. Paul was a little apprehensive. When plans for the pirate TV show failed to materialise, they all got cold feet. O'Rahilly's madcap schemes proved to be just a bit too fantastic for them to fully swallow. He told the Fairies he could secure them a record deal, but if he had some kind of deal going with RCA, this too failed to materialise.

Twink had been making his own attempts to land the Fairies with a record deal, and to this end approached an old friend of his called Robert Orbach with a view to fronting the band as their manager. Things had escalated at quite a pace over the last year, and despite initial reservations about record deals, the Pink Fairies appeared to be openly courting various labels. But the shadow of the Tin Pan Alley era still hung over the music business, and many record companies would not even entertain the idea of dealing directly with members of a band, let alone a band looking like the Pink Fairies.

It was sometimes necessary to have a respectable looking representative and with his business connections to the hip rag trade (he had worked for John Stephen on Carnaby Street, and had been a director of the fashionable clothes emporium I Was Lord Kitchener's Valet on Portobello Road), Robert Orbach seemed to fit the bill perfectly. Sandy says: "We went with Robert Orbach because we knew where he was coming from . . . a bit safer — because Ronan O'Rahilly's whole thing was just like . . . it was dream

world, and I think Paul especially thought, 'That can't be real. We're talking fantasy here.'" He continues: "What really pissed Ronan off was that we turned our backs on him and went with Polydor . . . and that's the point where it kind of became small, but it was more real than what Ronan was offering. . . . To me that has never been resolved really, whether the option should have been stick with Ronan and become 'gods,' or just go kind of mainstream and be a rock band and get a little bit of an advance, buy some new equipment, and get on the road again."

Robert Orbach may have been the epitome of the swinging London fashion scene, but he had little experience of the music business outside of a brief involvement with a mod band called the Carnaby in the mid sixties. He was hardly the next Andrew Loog Oldham and the band were largely left to sort their own affairs out. In some respects this suited the band fine, as they only really needed Orbach to act as a front to secure a record deal.

Twink had firm views about managers and Robert Orbach didn't remain with the band for long after the Polydor deal was secured. Says Twink: "I didn't think managers should get twenty per cent, I thought they should get ten per cent, but he wasn't happy with that . . . he got his ten per cent and we parted company."

It was not the last time the band would be associated with Orbach and he would return to manage them later for a spell. In an interview for the Victoria & Albert Museum website, Orbach himself is quoted as saying: "Every time I made money I would go into the pop business and then lose that and go back to what I knew."

Twink approached Polydor with Robert Orbach as the requisite businessman in a tie. Peter Knight Jr., head of A&R at Polydor, remembers it like this: "I've got the strongest possible vision of Twink because he had a very compelling personality, and my memory is he came into my office and said 'Right you're going to sign me!'" After he had recovered from the initial shock of Twink, the Polydor A&R man went to see the Pink Fairies live. "It was a very instant appeal," says Knight, "because of their originality to be honest. It was very punkish — even before punk — but I found it very entertaining . . . they were equally loud, but I think it was the fact that they were offering something quite different."

Impressed by the band's performance and originality, Peter Knight Jr. wasted no time in signing the Pink Fairies. The signing fee is reported as having ranged anywhere between £10,000 and £20,000, but Knight is somewhat dubious about such figures. Twink has confirmed as much, and says it was more in the region of £5,000.

The band had generated enough interest to be invited to record a session for John Peel's *Top Gear* programme on BBC Radio 1. Recorded on November 10 and 24 at Maida Vale Studio 4, the session consisted of three songs, two of which were covers: Lucille by Little Richard, and Jefferson Airplane's Three-Fifths Of A Mile In Ten Seconds. The only original was a Paul Rudolph composition called The Snake. First broadcast on November 28, 1970, The Snake stood out in particular, and in terms of energy and performance it showed the Pink Fairies at their very best. In *Fuz* magazine, author Seth Wimpfheimer goes so far as to say that "this was where they were at the peak of their powers."

Signed to Polydor, the band was booked into Recorded Sound Studios in early December 1970 to record a single. Although head of A&R with his producing days supposedly behind him, Peter Knight Jr. agreed to the band's request for him to produce them.

Knight Jr. was the son of the renowned composer and arranger, Peter Knight, now famous for scoring the orchestral work on Moody Blues' *Days of Future Passed* and virtually all of the Carpenters' work in the 1970s. Following in his father's footsteps, Knight Jr. was more accustomed to dealing with, and producing, easy listening fodder like the James Last Orchestra. Nevertheless he donned his producer's hat and gamely tackled what would become two of the Pink Fairies' most enduring and endearing anthems: The Snake and Do It! With its rampant lyrical imagery, The Snake is fairly self explanatory; Do It!, the flipside of the single, is a little more political.

Legend has it the lyrics to Do It! were written in roadie Joly McFie's Morris Minor on the way to the studio. Although it took its name from the revolutionary tract by American yippie activist Jerry Rubin, further lyrical inspiration for the song came from John Lennon and Yoko Ono. In an interview on Milwaukee Radio in 1988, Twink said: "We kind of figured because they [John and Yoko] were doing what we were doing they would

jump at the chance to write a song for us, because it was all like Power To The People, you know? We were all doing it together."

Twink wrote a letter to John and Yoko asking them to write a song for the Pink Fairies. When he received a letter back from the office of Bag Productions, the company set up by Lennon to deal with public relations and finance, saying that the Lennon-Onos were too busy, Twink was suitably piqued to write a song himself. Thus Do It! was born.

Despite some differences of opinion over songwriting credits and who contributed what to Do It!, whatever the circumstances surrounding its exact conception, with its overtly anti-authoritarian lyrics that espoused taking matters into your own hands, Do It! perfectly encapsulated the mood of the times. The peace and love optimism of the late 1960s faded as the decade gave way to the escalating troubles in Northern Ireland, as well as the bombs of the Angry Brigade, whilst the war in Vietnam dragged on amidst a growing atmosphere of growing global political foment. Peter Knight Jr. remembers the session vividly: "We took them into the studios to do the songs, and they were so loud we could hear them through the glass without turning the mics up, and it was like guitar, bass and two drummers."

Possibly because he usually dealt with completely different types of artists, Knight found working with the Pink Fairies an interesting and enjoyable experience. Joly McFie related to Seth Wimpfheimer how "[Knight] kept saying it was the most exciting session he'd done," and if Twink had a reputation for being difficult in recording studios, Knight remembers he was completely motivated.

With regard to Sandy's prominent bass sound on the single, Joly infers that Paul might have overdubbed it himself. Peter Knight Jr. refutes this idea and has said: "I would have remembered that. They all played live — that's why it was so bloody loud! We did lay tracks down live and did the vocals afterwards."

Sandy says that he can't really remember Knight contributing much, but if the finished single, The Snake, slightly lacks the immediate raw energy of the *Top Gear* version, also recorded live in the studio, it remains a creditable first outing nevertheless.

1970 proved to be a fairly auspicious year for the Pink Fairies. The band played some memorable performances, built up a sizeable grassroots following, and picked up a record contract to show for their efforts. A fitting end to the year, and one they deserved, was the Great Xmas Party at the Roundhouse, for which a stellar cast of underground talent was lined up to play. Organised by "Pinkwind in cooperation with *IT, Oz* and *Friends,"* the show completely sold out, thanks to the growing interest generated by the Pink Fairies and Hawkwind, who didn't fail to deliver the now customary Pinkwind jam. According to Twink, two to three thousand people had to be turned away.

Have wheels will road be ..... Ian 'The Plymouth Pixie' Lee on the bonnet of his Ford Transit, circa 1971 (Photograph courtesy of Ian Lee)

part two

Come to Never Never Land

Peter Knight Jr. made a promotional film to showcase a number of Polydor artists, of which the Pink Fairies and their single The Snake were a part. It was filmed on the set of *Oliver!* at Shepperton Studios, and originally

shown at a sales convention at Polydor's Hamburg headquarters. Knight can only remember the name of one other band he filmed, an act from the Midlands that he handled called the Love Machine. Introducing the film was a then unknown Olivia Newton John, who also provided links between the acts.

Knight thinks it quite possible that only an abridged version of each act made the final cut, as the film was edited down to forty minutes for the presentation. It was apparently well received at the conference, but neither The Snake or any other part of the film was ever seen by the public. It was a wasted opportunity by Polydor to promote the band more effectively from the outset, and the single, rush released in January 1971, failed to chart.

The single received a facetious review from Chris Welch in *Melody Maker* (January 30, 1971), which neglected to mention the record at all, but instead lampooned the druggy reputation of the Fairies and their fans. Some thirty years later, Seth Wimpfheimer gave the Fairies their due when he described the single as "one of the most unrefined and blistering prepunk tracks ever released," adding:

> *On both sides of this debut release they burn full steam ahead with not a care for anything else in the world, except in going for broke with unlimited raw power. Here everything follows the awesomely HUGE and ever-widening guitar sounds of Paul Rudolph as he navigates both sides of this screaming single into exuberant proto-metal rave ups fuelled by dope, rock'n'roll and fucking in the streets as lifestyle and shoved into the tiny confines of* a *45rpm single . . .*

While the Pink Fairies' debut single failed to ignite the charts, its release did coincide with the explosion of a bomb at the home of the Tory Secretary of State for Employment, Robert Carr, on January 14. Although not connected directly to the Pink Fairies at the time, the Angry Brigade bombings did have ramifications within the Cosmic Family. *IT* had been receiving communiques from the Angry Brigade, and as editor, it was Mick's duty to publish them. This brought Farren to the attention of the Special Branch. Boss and Paul Rudolph were staying at Mick's flat in

Clifton Gardens when the Bomb Squad raided early one morning, and all three were accordingly dealt with as potential terrorists.

Boss recalls how he had a premonition about being busted, so he and Mick stashed their cannabis the previous night. “Rudolph didn’t get back until the small hours of the morning,” says Boss, “and, unaware of our paranoia, did what he always did which was to put his dope in his socks, and stick it in his sock drawer.” The following morning the police arrived and the street was cordoned off. “It was a serious raid,” says Boss, “and they had all these different vans, cars and bikes, and they’ve got dogs to smell out explosives — not drugs!”

Mick was obviously the main target for the raid, but Boss and Paul were also given the full treatment. Despite finding Paul’s stash of Lebanese hashish, the police were more interested in Boss’s collection of badges. Says Boss:

> I *used to have this tiny little chest of drawers all full of badges . . . buttons, and this guy, he’s emptied all these buttons — Free Angela Davis and all sorts, so he picks out this one and looks very seriously at me, and then Rudolph, ’OK. Who’s the fucking Commie Red?’ and holds up* a *Chairman Mao badge, and I went ’What?’ He goes, ’Who’s the fucking Commie Red?’ and I went ’You are joking, right?’*

But they weren’t joking, and the main “Commie Red” was being given the third degree in the other bedroom. Evidence linking Mick to the Angry Brigade bombings was what the Special Branch hoped to find, but according to Mick, “all they came up with was Boss’s Chairman Mao button, most of our drugs and reams of mildly subversive literature and documentation.” Mick was ordered to flush all the pills and cannabis down the toilet, because, as Mick relates in *Give The Anarchist A Cigarette,* the Special Branch wanted to avoid giving “those drug squad slags the time of day.” He was then served a second warrant and whisked away for a raid on the *IT* offices.

After the questioning of Mick, Ed Barker and Paul Lewis at the *IT* offices, the Special Branch left some six hours later. They didn’t find

anything, though the repercussions affected not only the Cosmic Family, and were felt throughout the wider underground culture. Dozens of other people were raided that same week, thus providing the Special Branch with a useful insight into other areas of the counterculture, "learning far more than they needed to know," as Mick now puts it. The activities of the Angry Brigade weren't universally approved of, but the police activity they provoked ensured that the likes of *IT* and *Friends* would continue to support them over the establishment any day. The Pink Fairies would later play benefits for those arrested during the course of investigations into the Angry Brigade bombings.

The serious issue of bombings aside, Sandy's relationship with Miss Pamela hit the rocks in January 1971. Miss Pamela went home to the States where she was employed as a nanny for Frank Zappa's children, Moon Unit and Dweezil, but returned to the UK for the shooting of Zappa's *200 Motels.* Frank gave Miss Pamela the part of a radio station interviewer, or "an avid mini-mama groupie-doopie news-hen," as Pamela puts it in her autobiography *I'm With The Band.* "We should have just let it drop when she went back," says Sandy, but instead the couple spent two nights at a hotel near the Pinewood film set where the movie was being made. Sandy remembers Keith Moon cavorting around the set in his nun's habit, and was particularly pleased to meet Jimmy Carl Black, one of the original Mothers of Invention, over breakfast. With bigger fish to fry, Miss Pamela's relationship with Sandy ended soon after.

Sandy's attentions were meant to be elsewhere: the Pink Fairies had an album to record and live commitments to attend. As befitting a band with a newly signed record deal they set about upgrading their equipment, and in so doing, spent much of their advance on a new PA and backline system for Paul and Sandy.

The band was also better disposed to employ another full time roadie, preferably one with his own transport, and through an ad in *Melody Maker* they found Ian Lee — a roadie with a new long wheel based Transit van.

"Little" Ian Lee, or "the Plymouth Pixie," as the band sometimes called him, was born in the rough Devonport docklands district of Plymouth on May 15, 1948. As a young teenager he hung around outside the Black Cat club with his rocker mates and watched bands shifting their gear into the

club. When he was thirteen he persuaded his brother to take him to see Screaming Lord Sutch, and soon after that Gene Vincent. Lee says of Gene Vincent: “It was amazing to see this fantastic person that really rocked and to me, then and now, must be the greatest real rocker I have ever seen.”

As the sixties progressed, Ian Lee succumbed to the sounds of the Beatles and Bob Dylan, and by the end of the decade had immersed himself in the progressive rock scene, which was also the new music policy of the old Black Cat club, calling itself now the Van Dyke.

Lee had a passion for motorbikes. He had a National Racing licence and travelled around the country at weekends racing against some of the country’s top riders. If he wasn’t away racing, he spent his time at the Van Dyke, which was booking budding acts like Led Zeppelin, Fairport Convention, the Nice and Free.

It was at Van Dyke that Lee became involved with a local band called Skinny Finch, and warmed to the idea of becoming a roadie. Taking voluntary redundancy at the Clarks shoe factory in Plymouth, Lee sold his beloved Aermacchi road racing motorcycle, bought himself a six wheel Transit van and moved to London. He quickly found himself regular roadie work with a band called White Lightning, later called Thunderzone, whose manager Mark Newton was involved in booking bands at Eel Pie Island in Twickenham.

The experience at Eel Pie Island stood him in good stead. After Thunderzone split up, Ian found himself freelancing via an agency, and worked for an eclectic mix of bands, including the Groundhogs, Maynard Ferguson’s jazz band, the Freddie Mack Extravaganza, Help Yourself and Brinsley Schwarz.

Lee also toured with Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons for a couple of months. By late 1970 he was living in a flat in Chelsea with an American called Dave Tiles, who had been an early sound engineer for Jimi Hendrix. Hendrix died in the Grove area only months before, and Lee recalls: “I was suddenly involved with all these people who were the remnants of the London Hendrix scene — and it was a hell of a scene — I can remember that girlfriend Hendrix was last with used to come round our flat a lot.”

Dave Tiles had been trying to get a band together with ex-Pretty Things drummer Viv Prince, but Prince proved too unreliable. With Tiles at a loose end, and Lee tired of freelancing, an ad was concocted for the Transport classified column in *Melody Maker,* which read: "Two Taurus roadies with transit van seek work." "We had a few replies," says Ian, "and went for a few interviews with bands that were a bit straight, and we didn't want to work for anyway — not our scene — then whilst I was out on the road with the Four Seasons, David had a phone call from Twink." Tiles already knew Twink, but wasn't interested in the job. According to Ian, "Tiles didn't want to know, he said 'I don't wanna work with them, they took all their clothes off at Phun City!'"

After a thorough and satisfactory inspection of his van by Boss and Paul Rudolph, Ian Lee got the gig and, upon completion of the Frankie Valli tour at the end of January 1971, started working for the Pink Fairies.

Polydor booked the Pink Fairies into the prestigious Command Studios in Piccadilly, and the recording sessions for *Never Never Land* began on March 1, 1971. "We were put in a massive studio, at vast expense," explains Sandy of Command. "It was the only studio that could record the entire London Symphony Orchestra, it was awe inspiring . . . all this technology. The thirty-two track studio that could turn into a sixty-four track studio. We ended up there, hanging out in Studio 1, smoking dope and trying to write songs — that's what took the time, that's what took the money, and we just wrote the songs there!"

The LSO complained about the band burning the carpet with their cigarettes and joints, which earned the Pink Fairies a reprimand from Polydor.

Peter Knight Jr. had moved from Polydor's A&R department into marketing and was not around to produce the album. At one point Pete Townshend was mooted to produce the Pink Fairies (the Who had links to Polydor), but declined, telling *IT:* "I'm honoured, but my commitments are too heavy." Polydor hired Neil Slaven instead. Slaven had produced a number of albums around this time, amongst them the Egg's *Polite Force* and Savoy Brown's *Street Corner Talk.* He has mixed feelings about *Never Never Land:* "The Pink Fairies! Yes! I don't remember how or why I was recruited. The sessions were always at night and they rolled the biggest

joints I've ever seen in my life. I spent a lot of time in another studio sleeping. I think my nominal identification as producer was a sop to the head office."

The first song the band attempted to record at Command Studios was Uncle Harry's Last Freakout, by now a firm favourite with the fans. The single version of Do It! was also included, and featured a new acoustic introduction.

The reviewer in *Frendz* (July 8, 1971) was of the opinion the album should have had some of the band's live favourites, such as their covers of Tomorrow Never Knows and the Rudolph variation on the Ventures' Walk Don't Run. (The latter turned up on the second album.)

To some extent the album was let down by the production job. Says Neil Slaven:

> *They were adamant in what they wanted to do, and I don't remember being all that helpful with suggestions . . . lt really was* a very *confused, some might say ignominious, part of my career as a producer. I quite liked them as individuals but there seemed to be a certain amount of role-playing going on — and my role was so much less important than theirs. Incidentally, the ignominy was mine. I was still learning how to take* a *producer's role at the time and the circumstances of those sessions weren't particularly character forming for me.*

Russell has a similar opinion: "I wasn't very impressed by Command, I didn't think they ever got to grips with what we sounded like, it was all a bit thin and over compressed — probably as much our fault as theirs. And actually, I wasn't too crazy about some of the material — we were very much finding our way, and it was nothing like what we were doing live. Neil was nice enough, but to some extent we were all struggling a bit in the dark."

"Neil tried to produce," recalls Twink, "but I don't remember him being much help. . . . He kind of got pushed into the backseat because we knew what we wanted, and it's a shame that Peter Knight couldn't have carried on with us, because he was pretty damned good — anyway, some of *Never*

Never Land turned out good anyhow." Boss has said: "I think we all thought *Never Never Land* was under produced. It didn't reproduce the band's live sound."

Both sides of the single — The Snake and Do It! — had largely been recorded live in the studio, and went some way toward capturing the energy of a Fairies live performance. *Never Never Land* on the other hand, the product of a luxurious, world class recording studio, was constructed by musicians who were fairly inexperienced in production, and a producer who was a relative novice himself. *Frendz* said: "Most of the tracks are unfortunately under-recorded, so it's really got to be played at full volume, and the material varies considerably from their live repertoire."

Chris Rowley in *IT* considered *Never Never Land* "a disappointment, unremarkable and peculiarly lifeless, a poor reflection of the excitement of their stage show during that period when both Russ Hunter and Twink beat the drums."

"As a live act we were the business," says Sandy, "but as a studio act we were shit . . . no, not shit . . . we just weren't used to the studio."

Much of the material for the album was written around the time of the recording sessions, and some of it during the sessions themselves, and was never played live, either before or after the album. Some of it simply wouldn't have translated well to the Pink Fairies live experience: Teenage Rebel may have romped along at breakneck speed, but Heavenly Man and The Dream Is Just Beginning were not the sonic onslaughts followers had come to expect of the band.

A limited number of *Never Never Land* was released in pink vinyl (now worth a fortune). A faulty batch of this coloured pressing was supposedly recalled, melted down and repressed into a red vinyl Jimi Hendrix LP According to *Frendz,* the album contained "a fine bunch of goodies (reservations about some of Twink's lyrics though) with particularly raunchy rock'n'roll by superdigits Rudolf [sic], and a ridiculously good sleeve." *Disc and Music Echo* also liked the sleeve, but was far less complimentary about the record: "Pink Fairies have one of the nicest ever covers on *Never Never Land* but it is diabolical. A self indulgent, untogether, unrehearsed row. Shame."

Reaction to the album was lukewarm or downright dismissive, but everybody loved the sleeve. Codesigned by the now renowned music photographer Pennie Smith and her artist partner Tony Veseley, the album cover was indeed a lavish affair. The record itself was enclosed in a picture inner sleeve with photos of the band and Boss in Kew Gardens, which in turn was wrapped in a gatefold card cover, depicting on the outside four fairies sat on the edge of a planet — one of them smoking a joint. The inside of the gatefold showed four fairies again, climbing the stalk of a flower, whilst wearing gas masks. The whole thing was sheathed in a clear plastic vinyl outer cover with the silhouette of more fairies screenprinted across it. The cover was nominated and came third in the Music Week Annual Sleeve Design Awards.

It was inevitable that accusations of selling out would be levelled at the Pink Fairies, signing to Polydor and releasing an album on a major label. A letter to *IT* (June 16-30, 1971), signed "Love from the Pink Fairies Fan Club," decried the Pink Fairies and all they supposedly stood for. The letter began: "The Pink Fairies failed despite desperate attempts by the various 'underground' capitalist interests involved to create a suitable screen for their profit making activities, the Fairies have failed to bring off the biggest con of the century." The irate fan then proceeded to disparage the band's musical credentials:

> *They are not good enough. They just aren't up to the super-image projected for them by the underground media (such as your own paper). Fuck it, what are they supposed to be? A high energy rock'n'roll band like the MC5, the Stooges or J Giels [sic] Band? Hardly, they haven't got the balls. Alright, a super-space freakout set-up like Hawkwind or the Floyd? No, they haven't got the technical ability. A get-it-on free-fare people- power Community Band? Far out. Fuck the Pigs and all that? Even the Airplane grew out of THAT one, and they're good musicians anyway.*

The Pink Fairies were not the first, nor would they be the last, band to be pilloried for signing a record contract. Signing to a major label has always been an uncomfortable dilemma for bands with an anti-establishment stance. Take the Clash and CBS in 1977, for example. But in

the late 1960s and early seventies there was still little option. Three of the leading UK underground groups of the time, Pink Fairies, Hawkwind and Edgar Broughton Band, were on major labels Polydor, United Artists and Harvest, a subsidiary of EMI, respectively. The Deviants may have provided a template several years earlier and released *Ptooff!* themselves (with a little help from millionaire Nigel Samuel) but it had been a one off, and an exception to the rule.

In their defence, the Fairies told *Zigzag* in the summer of 1970, even before having a record deal: "I think it's really good to rip off a record company for a huge amount of bread — I think that's really far out because they're the people you should rip off. . . . The whole community system/underground has got to be financed and the way I see it, the record companies are in a good position to do it."

Having secured a record deal with Polydor, the question of publishing deals remained — something of a minefield in itself with the Pink Fairies. The band had a bank account in the name of "Pink Fairy Writers" in order to give all the band members an equal footing, and to take care of the day to day running of the band's business affairs. Everything went into this pot, and all expenses and wages were paid out of it. The band gave manager Robert Orbach the impression they were unencumbered by any publishing ties, and Orbach, assuming the band was free to enter into a new agreement, met Bryan Morrison with a view to signing the band to his publishing agency.

As common practice dictates, Morrison checked first with the Performing Rights Society (PRS). "Not that we were trying to rip Bryan off," says Twink. "I think we were a bit naive, so anyway we went in there and Bryan had done his checking and he'd come up with the fact the three remaining Deviants were signed to Nat Joseph's publishing company [Logo Songs Ltd] at Transatlantic, and I was already signed to a company called Active Music, so that was that!"

Bryan Morrison was a somewhat wily character, recalls Sandy, and they didn't consider him particularly trustworthy. Morrison seemed to take great pleasure in pointing out that he already "owned" Twink, and while there was some foundation to this claim, it was a management contract (still in existence from the Pretty Things) and nothing to do with publishing.

However, Twink had already been in negotiations with Blue Mountain Music, a publishing subsidiary of Island, a fact that had somehow got pushed to one side. It was clear that none of the band was technically free to sign with anyone.

The band then spoke to Geoffrey Everett from their current booking agency MAM. Everett had been a broadcaster and one time general manager at Radio Luxembourg before working for the MAM agency, which was owned by Gordon Mills, who had launched the careers of Tom Jones and Englebert Humperdinck, and at the time was nurturing his latest protege Gilbert O'Sullivan. It made sense for the band to turn to MAM's publishing wing. Following a meeting with Nat Joseph, the band bought themselves out of the Logo Songs contract at Transatlantic, except for Twink who couldn't because he was with a publisher called Active. Paul, Russell and Sandy signed with MAM, adhering to the Pink Fairy Writers principle of putting all the money into one pot and sharing it. All of the songs, including The Snake and Do It!, that had already been written and were in the process of being recorded, were then assigned to MAM.

Soon afterwards, Twink reopened negotiations with Blue Mountain when money was required to replace a stolen guitar. Twink wasn't bound by the MAM deal, so technically he was free to take to Blue Mountain any of his songs not assigned to MAM under the terms of the Fairy Writers contract. It still proved to be a dilemma though. "We had agreed all songs would go to Fairy Writers," explains Twink, "so really I was caught between a rock and a hard place, because I had an agreement with the chaps, but I took it under my own authority to break that agreement to help the band."

Twink infers that Blue Mountain used some of his share of the Pink Fairy Writers money to pay off Active Music, in a similar way that the others had paid off Nat Joseph. MAM were understandably piqued by this, as they were fully expecting to control the rights to all songs on the album. It is hardly surprising that the songwriting and publishing credits on *Never Never Land* were incorrect by the time the album returned from the pressing plant.

Some years later Twink approached MAM about receiving greater recognition for his part in the creation of Do It! Although MAM thought the

request highly irregular so many years after the contract was originally signed, they begrudgingly acceded and added Twink's name. Sandy concedes that as Twink did write the lyrics this was only fair.

Duncan 'Sandy' Sanderson onstage with Tony Andrews' custom made PA system, bought with the proceeds of the Polydor advance, circa 1971 (Photograph courtesy of Duncan Sanderson)

part three

Camping it up at the Gay Lib Dance

Amidst the chaos of publishing rights and recording sessions, the Pink Fairies performed a number of benefits in support of the White Panthers. White Panther John Carding reported in *IT* (March 11-25, 1971) how one such benefit, on February 12 at the Harrow Inn in Abbey Wood, was "packed to its 700 capacity for the sounds of the Pink Fairies, Hawkwind, etc. . . . On the financial side we made approximately £100 to help us continue our activities. Right on!"

However idealistic and "right on" their manifesto might seem now, the Panthers did a great deal of good work for their respective communities and even beyond them. Carding explained how, after obtaining perishable food

from local supermarkets, they distributed about £100 weekly to the old and poor, and to communes. “We are trying to make the Panthers in our area a catalyst for local peoples/revolutionary/community activity,” he said.

It wasn’t just community issues that concerned the Fairies; the besieged underground press was also high on their list of causes. The *Oz* Police Ball held on March 6, 1971, was one of many benefits to raise funds for *Oz* magazine, which had been busted for obscenity when their “School Kids’ Issue” was considered likely to corrupt the morals of minors. Amongst the other bands listed to play was Gene Vincent’s Houseshakers (it’s unlikely Mick’s hero did perform in the end, as his physical health was very much in decline by this time), and Third World War, which was centred on the nucleus of Jim Avery and Terry Stamp, two session musicians from Shepherd’s Bush. Third World War were particularly uncompromising in terms of the revolutionary rhetoric espoused in their lyrics, but they were also something of an anomaly within the context of the underground. Although their left wing revolutionary stance fitted perfectly with the shifting attitudes of the underground press, they looked and dressed more like suedeheads, a subculture that had evolved from skinheads. One song, Shepherd’s Bush Cowboy, referenced boozing, skinheads, “queer-bashing,” gambling, prostitutes and football hooliganism, before it ended with the imprisonment of the song’s protagonist. Other songs, such as MI5’s Alive, Ascension Day and Preaching Violence, all advocated the overthrow of the monarchy and government by means of violent revolution.

Mick Farren was impressed enough to describe Third World War in *IT* as “essentially Britain’s MC5” (a comparison more frequently made to the Pink Fairies over the years). “The similarity,” wrote Farren, “is that they play simple uncomplicated hard rock romping and stomping, and sing lyrics that stem from Dagenham factory floors, preaching violence against the bosses and the rest of a hostile society.” He concluded: “I have a strong feeling that, along with Hawkwind, Pink Fairies and a few others, they’ll do a lot to move rock away from self consciousness and artiness and bring it back to the street corner and parking lot.”

Politically emotive issues such as the IRA, and internment in Northern Ireland, the Angry Brigade, women’s lib, and gay lib were coming to the fore, and the Pink Fairies obliged requests to play benefits for all manner of

causes throughout 1971. On April 30, they played a Gay Liberation "dance" at Camden Town Hall, which was reported in *Frendz* as "hundreds of freaks, gay, straight and just plain weird [cavorting] merrily to the music of the Pink Fairies and Hawkwind, in an atmosphere generally reminiscent of decadent Rome." Russell says of the evening: "I went in full drag, and the others did hideous things with lipstick and makeup. Paul looked particularly alarming, like a belligerent aunt who'd lost a chainsaw."

Russell had openly been wearing makeup and women's clothing for several years, both on stage and off. "I often wore drag," he says, "since the summer of 1968 in fact. Around the clubs [Marc] Bolan and I were about concurrent in starting to apply kohl to our eyes, and the rest of the makeup and clothes just followed on from there." Jenny Ashworth says:

> *I remember* a *pair of green lace trousers and* a *tight pink jumper [Russell] used to wear, not to mention the makeup. This was in the Deviants days. We knew* a *girl who was* a *dressmaker and she made him* a *suit from pink Noddy and Big Ears fabric. This was all entirely his own idea so he was certainly not following any fashion. He might have been pushing gender barriers but it was on his own inclination. It certainly wasn't* a *fashion trend!*

As well as band members dressing up, the Camden Town Hall gig is where Nik Turner from Hawkwind was electrocuted whilst soundchecking, and where Russell was forcibly dragged off his drum stool by officials after they had switched off the power. Steve Mann, writing for *Frendz,* said: "There was David (the Boss) Goodman looking demure (?) in a flowing white dress, Russell Hunter camping it up outrageously and looking sultry in a plunge-neckline J. Ashworth original, and [Nik] Turner trying to electrocute himself on stage." Of the electrocution, Boss recalls: "I was at the desk in the middle of the hall with Del Dettmar . . . [Nik] comes on and he gets hold of this mic, and he's got his saxophone in his hand, and there were sparks flying off the guy! After what seemed like an eternity, probably only seconds, Rudolph comes running out of the wings and charges into him, and sends him flying . . . probably saved his life."

Nik Turner recalls: “As I was being electrocuted I could hear people shouting ’Turn the fucking power off!’ and I could hear my heartbeat sort of slowing down, and I seemed to be in this great big blue flash that was going bzzzzzzzzzz. . . . I think I had about 10,000 watts going through me! . . . I just sort of came round and people thought I was dead.” Nik was taken off to hospital but returned to play the gig. According to Steve Mann in *Frendz,* it turned out to be one of Hawkwind’s best performances to date. The incident with Nik Turner meant that the Pink Fairies were late starting their set, but when they did, wrote Mann, they “stormed into a tremendous [Tomorrow Never Knows], ordered the audience to *do it,* and were cut short somewhere in the middle of Walk Don’t Run by the usual uptight management.” When the council officials turned off the power, a solitary torch provided the only illumination as “the audience prepared to tear the hall apart.” The two Pink Fairies drummers and Hawkwind’s Terry Ollis provided a percussive onslaught in the absence of electricity. “A little man in a council uniform valiantly tried to part Russ from his drum kit,” wrote Mann.

Proceedings eventually ground to a halt when the council threatened to impound the band’s equipment. Says Russell:

> *Getting the plug pulled generally seemed to happen in London, where there was a more slavish attachment to licensing laws or sometimes because public buildings often had these automatic decibel cut-out devices fitted. Fortunately they could be overridden, as they were mostly set to plunge the building into silent darkness if so much as three dogs barked in unison. But it did happen occasionally, and I was left tootling away by myself for what seemed an eternity — especially to the audience.*

Steve Mann wrote that both bands put in outstanding performances, but concluded it was the audience more than the music that mattered: “A few hundred Gay Lib members and sympathisers managed to produce more community spirit and a sense of totally unselfconscious enjoyment than any number of ’liberated’ freaks religiously digging the latest west coast sensation at the Albert Hall or Isle of Wight.”

Fiery Creations' motives and methods of organising the Isle of Wight festival were still anathema to the more radical sections of the underground, but many other people had also become disillusioned by the increasingly commercial direction the big festivals were taking. Staged with little or no consideration for the needs of those attending, these festivals were considered money making exercises for the promoters, pure and simple. The underground's first attempt at staging its own festival, Phun City, had not been a success in terms of its original intention (to raise funds for IT), but it nevertheless offered a glimpse of what might be achieved if the "alternative society" was left to pursue its own goals. Phun City provided the inspiration and template for a number of festivals the following summer, several of which the Pink Fairies played, including Glastonbury.

Hollywood Star Gazer
LSD IS A DRUG-NIXON
The lights turned on and the curtain came dow
And when it was over it felt like a dream
They stood at the stage door and begged for a
scream The agent had paid for a black limousine
which waited outside in the rain
Did you see them?

Fairies wear makeup and you'd better believe it..." - The Pink Fairies. Hipgnosis photo session, circa 1971. (Photograph by Hipgnosis, courtesy of Storm Thorgerson)

part four

Westway to the West Country

Attending the Bath festival that summer, a dairy farmer by the name of Michael Eavis was inspired to put on his own festival at Worthy Farm in Pilton, Somerset, in September 1970.

A man called Andrew Kerr had also been at Bath and Isle of Wight, and in turn inspired by Eavis's festival at Worthy Farm, decided with his partner Arabella Churchill to plan Glastonbury Fair (commonly referred to now as Glastonbury Fayre). Kerr told *Frendz*: "There seemed to be a need for a truly free festival. All the others had some profit motive behind them — some for worthy causes, some for greed, none for love. The bread was made out of the people who could least afford it; it was time they were given a party."

Stonehenge was mooted as a possible site for this "party," but lack of financial backing and problems with the Ministry of Defence led Kerr to approach Michael Eavis with a view to staging a festival on his land. "Worthy Farm is linked to Stonehenge, the Glastonbury Zodiac and the great cosmic pattern of ley lines and energy points," reasoned Kerr. "The whole system is a mind bender."

By the end of 1970, Andrew Kerr and Arabella Churchill had moved into the Worthy farmhouse with various friends and formed Solstice Capers Ltd. During the winter of 1970 they began to put their plans into operation, of which the Pink Fairies played an initial part. After the original idea of Stonehenge was discounted, Twink says, "the Pilton site was suggested, and we all went down there . . . and had a look at the site, and I was against the site because of the pylons running across the fields — I didn't think it was a good idea, but it was decided that was where it would be."

Arabella Churchill was moved to tell the *Observer* in June 2006: "It was a wild time. Hawkwind and the Pink Fairies used to rehearse in the barn and they were terrifying until you got to know them." Twink says this is not entirely correct as he can't remember rehearsing in the barn, but the Fairies did do "an awful lot of promotion at gigs for the festival. We sent money down to the farm, when the farm was short of money to pay the telephone bills, and other things like that, so yeah, we were right there from the very beginning."

The festival went ahead as scheduled, and *Frendz* reported: “Even though the long awaited and much talked about superstars the Dead, Airplane, CSN&Y etc. never actually made it, the music was very good and continuous.” The Dead had been waylaid after performing a gig in Amsterdam, but the final line up that included Family, Traffic, Gong, Arthur Brown, Magic Michael, a pre-Ziggy Stardust David Bowie, Edgar Broughton Band, Hawkwind and of course the Pink Fairies, was more than enough to satisfy the 8,000 or so festival goers.

The Pink Fairies had spent much of the preceding two months touring to promote *Never Never Land.* Alternating their own dates supporting old friends the Pretty Things, this near enough took them right up to the Glastonbury festival on June 24, 1971. The Pink Fairies pitched camp next to Hawkwind, and the Cosmic Family set about joint entertainment in the form of the Pink Fairies Marching Drum Band. Including in their number Twink, Paul Rudolph, Mick Farren, Bob Calvert and Nik Turner, the Pink Fairies Marching Band paraded around the campsite early in the morning, Pied Piper like, rousing drowsy festival goers with a cacophony of drums and flutes. (Some of this is captured for posterity in Nic Roeg’s documentary film, *Glastonbury: The Movie.)* The almost obligatory Pinkwind jam failed to materialise, despite the presence of members of both the Pink Fairies and Hawkwind at the festival. Indeed, a delay in the schedule resulted in the Fairies very nearly not playing the festival at all. This was due to headliner Arthur Brown insisting he didn’t miss his designated time slot, regardless of the late running of the bands.

Arthur Brown had a hit with Fire and was famous for wearing a burning crown whilst performing it. Twink says that Brown, “had tarot cards lined up, and flaming crosses, and had to go on at midnight.” Says Ian Lee:

> *Arthur Brown fucked the festival up that night. He caught* a *lot of people stoned on acid, and he freaked* a *lot of people out, and they left the stage area. I think they went back to their tents or hid in the woods, ’cos Arthur Brown appeared on stage with a bloody crucifix — on fire — and it was like the Ku Klux Klan in your head . . . he gave out this evil presence, and the whole atmosphere*

became evil from it, especially for those who were stoned or tripping.

Sometimes before a gig, usually at festivals, members of the Fairies collectively dropped acid before going on stage. Glastonbury was one such occasion. “We were all in an advanced state of delirium through most of the event,” says Russell, “so I couldn’t comment with any degree of authority. Personally, it was not common for me to play on acid. Away from the loose chaos of festivals I was more prone to simpler stimulants. Up or down was preferable to the unexpected diversions of sideways in the somewhat structured, even for us, environment of a sixty minute set and the accompanying journey to and from it.”

The band calculated they wouldn’t start peaking until they were coming off stage after a performance, but at Glastonbury, because of the over running schedule, they mistimed the dropping of the acid. Consequently, those in the band who had partaken of LSD were reaching the advanced stages of a full blown acid experience before playing a note. “We were well out of it, yeah,” says Twink, “but just as we were taking off we were told there wasn’t going to be time for our set . . . and we basically took over the stage.”

Inappropriate use of an electrical plug caused a problem with the sound while the Fairies were tripping. Recalls Boss: “Halfway through the set the PA cut in at twice the volume . . . you can suddenly hear it halfway through Uncle Harry. The volume suddenly goes twice as loud, and I think one of the sound guys said, ’Oh, what’s this fucking plug?’ and BANGI.’cos the sound was completely out of my control — nothing to do with me at all!”

Despite the somewhat raw sound quality of the following year’s *Glastonbury Fayre* LIP the recording captures an anarchic but inspired performance by the Pink Fairies. Twink barks his way through a chaotic Do It! and Paul Rudolph pulls out all the stops. Uncle Harry is wildly improvised and brilliant in spite of the acid, or maybe even because of it. At the end of the recording Rudolph can be heard shouting “Keep it together!” — as much a directive for his own mind as an exhortation to the crowd.

Glastonbury would prove to be the last time that Twink played for the Pink Fairies, and the end of what many people consider the classic line up

of the band: Twink, Paul Rudolph, Russell Hunter and Duncan Sanderson.

Frendz reported that the only real problem with Glastonbury Fair, at least as far as mainstream news was concerned, was that so little went wrong: "[F]or the people who came it was all they could have asked for. About 8,000 together for nearly a week to hear thirty five groups, all in the sun, get stoned, make love, and roam around the countryside — all for free." The report stated that: "Glastonbury Fair was precisely what it was because of the extent of the organisation. . . . And despite the many notices in Glastonbury shops and cafe windows 'No Hippies or such like served here' the villagers never actually rose in armed pitchfork rebellion against the freaks."

Phun City provided a tantalising microcosm of how an alternative society might work, and upon this the organisers of Glastonbury brought the possibilities closer to reality. Ostensibly experiments in alternative living, these free festivals undoubtedly provided the inspiration for the alternative travelling culture that grew up in the 1970s. Interviewed in 1999, Mick Farren stressed the significance of festivals like Phun City and Glastonbury on the travelling culture lifestyle: "They were the absolute start of the whole thing. Prior to the festivals, a few beats hitchhiked around during the summer but mainly headed for seaside resorts and London. The festivals really provided a focus for what you might call potlatch tribal gatherings or clan meets. Phun City and Glastonbury also proved that a festival could be staged on an economic wing and a prayer."

After Glastonbury, the Pink Fairies had to come to terms with the departure of Twink, who was headed for Morocco to indulge his interest in Moroccan culture. Other reasons have also been cited for his leaving, including the suggestion that he was on the run from the mafia (not as implausible as it may sound, given the bad feeling borne towards him by the owners of the Speakeasy, who were alleged to have had mob connections). Sources closer to the band say it was the breakdown of the relationship between Twink and his girlfriend Silver that led to his departure. "Silver told me that Twink became increasingly paranoid and possessive around this time," Jenny Ashworth recalls. "I think it would be safe to say he began to unravel because he knew Silver was seeing someone else. She was a very special lady. . . . Silver leaving just pulled the carpet from under him."

Twink refuses to discuss the matter in detail, but concedes that his relationship with Silver came to a head about this time and while he did indeed have personal problems, they were with himself or in his own head, rather than being any fault of Silver's. He says:

> *At the time I had these problems, and it just seemed like* a *good idea to go away. I never said to the band, 'I'm leaving the band.' I said, 'I'm going to Morocco.' But, and it's* a *pretty outrageous thought really, my intention was to return to the band, whether it be after a month, two months, three months, six months, or whatever. But I think what happened was the band had changed, and I'd changed and it didn't happen. Maybe it was my fault for not communicating that.*

Twink was a very charismatic showman. As well as being enormously popular in his own right, part of the band's popularity was down to the dual percussive onslaught of Twink and Russell. Mick Farren says that Twink had "stage presence" and "could totally involve an audience in his particular brand of lunacy."

If anything, Twink's departure strengthened the band's resolve. In an April 1975 *NME* retrospective, Farren says as much: "With one flailing drummer removed, the emphasis of the band's live show fell more on guitarist Paul Rudolph . . . [his] playing expanded its scope at an alarming rate while, unhampered by a second drummer, Russell's technique improved rapidly."

Mick Farren received news while at Glastonbury Fair that the *IT* offices had been busted by detectives searching for copies of *Nasty Tales*, an underground comic book established by Mick and Edward Barker. Having been raided, arrested and questioned in connection with the Angry Brigade bombings earlier in the year, Mick was arrested once again on his return from Glastonbury. Along with Edward Barker, Joy Farren and Paul Lewis, he was charged under the Obscene Publications Act with attempting to corrupt the morals of minors. Following on from the *Oz* 'School Kids' Issue obscenity trial, it was apparent that the establishment had its knives out for the underground press.

The *Nasty Tales* trial at the Old Bailey did not begin until nearly eighteen months later, in January 1973, allowing the defendants plenty of time for preparation, as well as a series of *Nasty Tales* benefits. The Pink Fairies and Hawkwind were the main attractions at the "Nasty Balls," as they came to be called.

In stark contrast to the rural idyll of the Vale of Glastonbury, one of the Pink Fairies' first gigs without Twink was under the arches of the recently constructed Westway flyover at Portobello Green. Officially opened to traffic in July 1970, the building of the motorway generated a great deal of opposition from the outset. Cutting a swathe through the area, the Westway may well have physically divided the geographical neighbourhood, but it also galvanised the wider community that had rallied against it.

Since the mid sixties local community action had forced a change in housing conditions in the area by confronting unscrupulous landlords, squatting empty buildings, and reclaiming private communal gardens, such as Powis Square. The Notting Hill Free School was instrumental in encouraging self help on issues of housing and immigration, and underground concerns (such as Release, formed by Caroline Coon and Rufus Harris, and BIT) set up offices in the area to cater for the rising population of young hippies, and their problems relating to drug use and drug busts.

When the government sanctioned the building of a motorway through the heart of the community, with little thought for the lives that it would affect, some locals took matters into their own hands. Mick says: "Much of the Grove community, both black and white, thought there should be some kinda payback for putting a fucking great ugly motorway though the middle of the 'hood. The Westway free concerts, the guerrilla landscaping on Portobello Green, and ideas like mine in print were the initial pressure that started the ball rolling, but after that it came down to more conventional local politics."

In November, Mick Farren outlined a plan for a self contained community centre to take some of the load off welfare services and provide Ladbroke Grove with a "much needed environment for music, theatre and meetings." A local network of community actions eventually led to the Greater London and local Borough councils handing back the derelict,

unsightly land beneath the flyover for community use. The Pink Fairies and Hawkwind set up their gear beneath the empty motorway arches and started a tradition of free gigs.

The electrical power for these gigs under the Westway in the summer of 1971 were allegedly supplied by a local cafe called the Mountain Grill. Once again, Russell had to be forcibly removed from his drum stool when the police followed up a complaint from an irate resident who couldn't hear his television. (The incident is immortalised in Right On, Fight On, the opening track on the Pink Fairies' next album, as well as being captured on celluloid, and in photos that adorn Hawkwind's album, *X In Search of Space.)*

Anthony Perry, Director of the North Kensington Amenity Trust, says: "I was taken to court and fined for allowing the concerts, [and] had running battles with the people living opposite the Green."

Mick says of the Westway gigs: "In the beginning, they were planned to be spontaneous. The gear was quietly set up, the bands started to play and then we waited for the cops to arrive. The first ones were shut down, but after two or three a kind of ad hoc tolerance was established and more bands were able to play." He explains that the Westway gigs weren't strictly "benefits" as such. "They were Saturday afternoon free shows to test the waters about playing music on the vacant land created by the Westway construction. The White Panthers took care of most of the non musical stuff, like food and under the counter beer and basic manpower."

Established the following year was the Westway Theatre, which hosted the Magic Roundabout gigs, organised by the Greasy Truckers. Magic Roundabout featured the likes of Ace, Kevin Ayers, Camel, Chilli Willi, Keith Christmas, Henry Cow, Clancy, the Global Village Trucking Company, Gong and Skin Alley. In 1975, something more permanent was established. "Ultimately the Acklam Hall was built in time for punk and reggae," says Mick, "which was the ultimate, long term, official response to what had started with the Pinkwind shows."

In years to come the Westway would prove to be a powerful symbolic landscape. The Clash and their Sound Of The Westway tag being an example of its iconographical significance. However, the problems of the

wider community ran much deeper than the geographical and environmental issues presented by a new motorway flyover. The social malaise of the area and the dilapidated housing stock had been exacerbated by slum landlords, such as Peter Rachman, who took advantage of the Rent Act of 1957, decontrolling rents without providing security of tenure. This state of affairs had been endured by the largely West Indian immigrant population for years and, while the Ladbroke Grove area was already an enclave for bohemian activity, the early 1970s saw a significant increase in the numbers of hippies and freaks. The Hell's Angel Powis Square commune in Notting Hill was being raided on average three times a week. In May 1971, *IT* reported the trial of the Powis Square Bonfire Night Party defendants (Mick Farren and Steve Mann amongst them) as

> *a run-of-the-mill, our world against yours type of trial. But it was in the context of the Notting Hill Gate community, freaks and weirdos,* a *body of people who are subject to almost constant harassment by the police. Every day people just walking in the street are stopped and searched for drugs, harassed and occasionally beaten up and arrested . . . People can take only so much before they are forced to react.*

West Indian youths frequently experienced police harassment, and were routinely subjected to body searches in the street on the pretext of looking for drugs. One high profile example of harassment of the West Indian community was that of the Mangrove Nine. The Mangrove was a Caribbean restaurant on the All Saints Road that was known to police as a hangout for "black radicals" and "marijuana users," and subsequently became a target for regular raids. Matters came to a head in August 1971 when, at a demonstration against the police harassment of Frank Critchlow, owner of the Mangrove, the police used excessive force and arrested nine protesters. Charges of conspiracy to cause riot and affray, as well as attempted murder of police officers and assault were eventually thrown out at the trial and the Mangrove Nine, including Frank Critchlow and Darcus Howe, a British Black Panther Party activist, were found not guilty by an all white jury.

The underground community invariably rallied round, and benefit gigs were organised. Although the Pink Fairies weren't among those to play a

benefit for the Mangrove Nine, Sandy recalls that the band donated their takings from at least one gig to the Mangrove appeal. “People rallied to each group’s causes, but it was on a principled, rather than a personal, level in some cases,” explains Russell. “West Indian Londoners were never going to be impressed by the Fairies’ brand of musical pandemonium, set against their own tradition of ska, bluebeat and steel bands. But we all rubbed along pretty well together, which is no big deal these days, but back then was not the case in some parts of the city.”

'Pickets outside Mangrove 28 Preliminary Hearing' – Boss Goodman (seated, left) outside Marylebone Magistrates Court protesting against racially motivated police harassment in Notting Hill, circa 1970 (Photograph by Pat Keene, IT, November 5–19, 1970)

part one

The Amateur Promoters League of Great Britain

Inextricably linked with benefit gigs as much they were to the festival circuit, Twink boasted that the Pink Fairies would play totally free for the first six months of their career. The band didn't strictly adhere to this policy, but then it wasn't realistically possible to do so. The Pink Fairies were playing on average three to six nights a week, and of these at least two nights were usually benefits. "So, for a third of the week we weren't getting paid," says Boss, "or we were getting paid peanuts just to cover 'our expenses," which usually meant the cost of petrol. The band would rely on local hippies to put them up, or, if they were lucky, they'd stay in a cheap hotel or a bed and breakfast. In an article in *ZigZag,* the band explained:

> *If anybody phones and asks us to play for nothing we would — as long as we thought it was worthwhile from a community point of view . . . mind you, it's* a *drag setting oneself up as* a *judge to decide what is or is not worthwhile . . . Some people phone up and ask us to play for free, which we often do, but we prefer to ask for*

petrol money Like it cost us £40 of our own money when we played outside Bath. And some people who try to organise free concerts don't bother to work it our properly — they forget about arranging power and a *stage — so you spend* a *lot of bread just getting there. A lot of people don't appreciate what* a *hassle it is to transport all our equipment.*

Playing benefits certainly gave the band underground kudos and raised their profile, but it proved a double edged sword. Sandy looks back ruefully. He remembers Johnny Jones, from the MAM agency, telling him that because of the benefits they played for free, promoters were reluctant to pay the Fairies what a band of their stature should have been commanding (which, by the end of 1971, would have been around £500). In other words, many promoters were unwilling to pay the band for a club gig one night when they were playing free for a bunch of hippies under the motorway arches the next afternoon.

"So that was us shooting ourselves in the foot," says Sandy. "We made ourselves cheap by doing things for nothing."

Often, the band didn't even receive expenses. Sandy continues: "Dodgy promoters would use us to get a crowd in so they could make money for themselves, but then say, 'We didn't make enough money, so we can't afford to pay you, and anyway we're just trying to get a scene together here man!' They thought we would play for absolutely nothing! We referred to them as the Amateur Promoters League of Great Britain."

Before the Pink Fairies became more selective about who and what they played for, they supported many benefits simply because the recipients were friends, or were related to the underground press. "They were our mates," says Boss. "And whether we were aware of it or not, we were like *the* underground rock band, and it was the done thing to support these causes that your mates had. Whether you had the political nous, or not, was irrelevant." Such sentiments might suggest a level of political naivety or indifference, and Peter Jenner has since commented: "I was never convinced once Mick had left [the Deviants] that the Pink Fairies really did believe what they were doing and they were anything other than just a band

. . . I always felt that the Fairies were more bullshit, whereas the Broughtons were the real thing."

Similarly, author Marcus Gray relates how Terry Stamp of politico rock group Third World War considered the Pink Fairies to be, "just a bunch of middle class fakers, and perverts to boot." (Tender Guillotine, a track on Stamp's 2003 album, *Bootlace Johnny,* contains the lyric: *"While pink fairied hippies tried to suck up / Our persona and were gone / Like they never had been.")*

Unlike Third World War and Edgar Broughton, the Pink Fairies really only touched upon overtly political issues in a few of their songs. But because the Fairies weren't singing about workers' revolutions and bombs doesn't make their stance any less valid, and they could turn out a politically inspired song when the occasion warranted. Do It! and Right On, Fight On, for example. The important difference is that, in spite of their early braggadocio about only playing free gigs, the Pink Fairies placed as much emphasis on providing a good time through their music. If the Fairies didn't conform to Third World War or Peter Jenner's expectations of what the "real thing" should be, they were promulgating an alternative lifestyle and defending their right to live that way. Getting busted, hanging out in Portobello Road, making music, having a good time, drinking, getting stoned — these were all everyday issues that the average freak could relate to. The final decision as to what constituted a worthwhile cause was another matter.

"Initially, we just went off and bloody did it all," says Boss of the benefit gigs. But eventually the band did become more selective about what causes and for whom they would play. If the Mangrove Nine were considered worthy beneficiaries, there were others the band considered were not. "I think towards the end of that period we were probably a bit more choosy about what benefits we did," says Boss. "Obviously, if it was a load of bombers that were going to destroy London, I don't think we would have gone that far . . . like the Angry Brigade. But we probably did a benefit for them after the fact."

The band did play at least one benefit for Jake Prescott and Ian Purdie who were arrested on suspicion of causing, or conspiring to cause explosions under the guise of the Angry Brigade. Twink recalls: "We'd sit

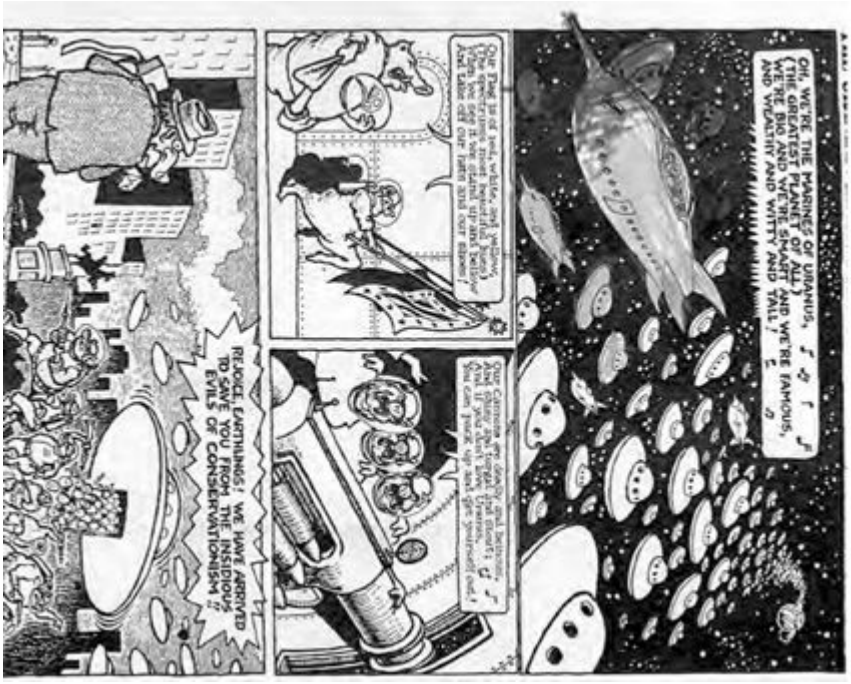
around and discuss it. Everyone was pretty clued up on what was going on so we didn't really have any problems sussing out what we felt was worthwhile — we might have made a couple of errors along the way, but I think most of them we figured out were pretty genuine."

Russell remembers the selection process somewhat differently. "It was very hit and miss," he says, "more or less as the fancy took one or the other of us. The promise of good and plentiful stimulants was always a winner; it was by no means always based on philanthropic ideals."

Loyal to the Pink Fairies, the rift from the Deviants fallout long since healed, the final word on the matter goes to Mick Farren: "Benefits had to fit in with the basic band work schedule. And sure, there were ones that were a total waste of time, but it was a learning process. And, yes, there were always assholes who mouthed off that you'd sold out if you had as much as half a pot to piss in, but — frankly — fuck 'em. We did all that we could do and that was fucking plenty."

NASTY BALL
HAWKWIND. PINK FAIRIES.
BISHOP'S BIG BOPPERS. LINDA LEWIS. SKIN ALLEY.
BLACKBEARD TOOTH DEATH MICK SONIC
REGINALD SQUEEZE. STEVE TOOK.
Wed 2 Feb. 8pm-6am. BUMPERS

Main image: Paul Rudolph on stage at Harmony Farm Festival, Kent, August 1970. (Photograph by and with permission of Steve Boyes) Inset: 'No Sissies - Nasty Ball All Nitter' - Nasty Tales trial benefit gig advert, Bumpers nightclub, Coventry Street, London, February 2, 1972 (Artwork by Edward Barker)


REJOICE, EARTHLINGS! WE HAVE ARRIVED TO SAVE YOU FROM THE INSIDIOUS EVILS OF CONSERVATIONISM !!
OH, WE'RE THE MARINES OF URANUS, (THE GREATEST PLANET OF ALL) AND WE'RE FAMOUS, WE'RE BIG AND STRONG AND WITTY AND TALL!

"Oh we're the pigs of Uranus..." - Gilbert Shelton's cartoon inspiration for the Pink Fairies' Pigs of Uranus song (Art and story by Gilbert Shelton, source Nasty Tales #2, 1971)

part two

Away with the Fairies

The first gig for the Pink Fairies following the departure of Twink was at Torquay Town Hall on July 4 or 5. The first free festival after Glastonbury was in the wilds of Kent. Arranged by the Tunbridge Wells Arts Lab, Harmony Farm took place in Ashdown Forest near Nutley, Kent, on August 4, 1971. Described as "a modest little open air festival for the nicer type of freak," the Pink Fairies, Brinsley Schwartz, Amon Din, Stackridge, Open Road and a local band, Ongle, were among the bands providing the music. *Frendz* said of the Fairies set: "The inevitable Pink Fairies. Far out! It was loud, it was long, it was heavy. Enjoyed by all. Their music varies from gig to gig and this was, I think, one of the better ones. Good vibes everywhere and warm applause. The Fairies, in fact, played completely free, even covering their own expenses."

Despite the Harmony Farm festival losing £350, a second one was arranged for September 11, with Hawkwind and Edgar Broughton as the main attractions. The Pink Fairies weren't in this line up, although Russell

Hunter stood in for Hawkwind's Terry Ollis on drums after Ollis allegedly collapsed in his tent.

In August the Pink Fairies played Country Comfort, another free event, with Hawkwind and Skin Alley at Grantchester Meadows in Cambridge. Adrian Foster, a sixteen year old Pink Fairies fan, lived a stone's throw away. He realised the event was happening on hearing through his kitchen window, "something akin to Hendrix at Monterey. I grabbed my tape recorder and pedalled furiously down to the Meadows in time to hear Paul Rudolph tuning up his guitar whilst playing the intro to Riders In The Sky. This was followed by the signature drum riff . . . before the band launched into what turned out to be the Beatles' Tomorrow Never Knows." Says Foster: "The Pink Fairies were absolutely deafening and totally unforgettable." Despite its low fi quality, the recording Foster made of the gig testifies that the band were on blistering form.

Grantchester Meadows was followed by Weeley, the last major festival the Fairies played that summer, and for which the set was the same except for the addition of Why Does A Red Cow? — the song that Boss used to sing in the Deviants days to alleviate boredom in the van, called up by Paul Rudolph to perform it here. (The performance is immortalised on the bootleg *Live at Weeley.)* Held on the bank holiday weekend of August 27-29, Weeley festival boasted a line up that included Rod Stewart and the Faces, Groundhogs, Greaseband, Rory Gallagher, Collosseum, Edgar Broughton, Juicy Lucy, Arthur Brown and Mungo Jerry. Organised by members of the local Clacton Roundtable, Weeley was ostensibly touted as a charity event, but had all the trappings of a commercial venture. It is now remembered for its pitched battles, which occurred when self appointed security, the Hell's Angels, tried to grab a slice of the food concessionaries action. The Angels took a bit of a beating from all accounts when a motley crew of official security, comprising some ex-commandos, and hot dog vendors marched upon their encampment, attacking them with iron bars and trashing some of their beloved motorcycles.

The Pink Fairies were not officially booked to play, but, as was their wont, they turned up anyway, along with Mick Farren and the *IT* press crew, and played for free. One festival goer, in Jeremy Sandford and Ron Reid's 1973 book, *Tomorrow's People,* recalled how: *"International Times*

newspaper had a tent there with a Soviet flag flying high above it as they always do. The editor [Mick Farren] and the editorial staff were all bombed out of their minds, and the editor was wearing a machete and combat gear."

Relating his own memories of Weeley in his autobiography, Mick says that the Cosmic Family entourage had all taken a dose of particularly strong green liquid LSD, provided by legendary underground dealer, John the Bog. As the trip wore on, the assembled crew felt as if they were destined to be stuck in the field forever, and should this be the case, what might they eventually do for food? An LSD warped conclusion was reached. Says Mick: "By far the least complicated solution would be to live off the flesh of all these worthless, witless, left over hippies." "Kill 'em and eat 'em!" announced Boss, who snatched up the machete and said he was "going out to get dinner." ("Kill 'em and eat 'em" was resurrected sixteen years later and used by the reformed Pink Fairies as the name for their reunion tour and LR)

Boss returned from his nocturnal lysergic foraging without any dead hippies, and the band, too hammered to play, had gone on anyway. A bootleg of the gig indicates a somewhat erratic performance, full of chemically inspired aggression. Paul Rudolph confirms that he spent some of the Pink Fairies performance on his back, playing the guitar, because the acid was so strong. Rudolph says: "I don't know how Boss ever got the equipment set up, but he did, and then miraculously everything worked and we all floated on and played." Ian Lee underlines Rudolph's comments: "We were tripping at Weeley, and me and Boss didn't realise we were going to go on, and we thought we were going to go on hours and hours later, but suddenly they changed the times and we were going on and we were just starting to trip and we had to set all the gear up out of our heads!" Ian Lee concludes that Weeley was a fantastic gig, "It wasn't just 'cause we were high . . . it was just fantastic, the crowd were brilliant."

John Peel was similarly impressed by what he heard of the Fairies. Writing in his column for *Disc and Music Echo,* Peel recalled being roused at 4am, "and from time to time music would hurtle like a thunderbolt from the stage far off to the left, along the lines of trees in front of me and into the distance on the right. It sounded particularly good when the Pink Fairies played."

Peel also made reference to a deportation order that had recently been served on Paul Rudolph after the band returned from a festival in Finland: "I was outraged, and hope you will be too, when Mick Farren told me that Paul of the Fairies has to leave the country in two weeks time courtesy of the Home Office. They're getting closer to you every time."

The trip to Finland was one of two foreign excursions in the months following Twink's departure. Taking place over the penultimate weekend in August 1971, the Pink Fairies appeared at the Ruis Festival in Turku, on a bill with Jeff Beck, Canned Heat, Juicy Lucy and Fairport Convention. From the moment they departed Heathrow airport the fun and games began. "I had to borrow Juicy Lucy's drummer's kit," recalls Rudolph, "as mine never arrived. It flew off somewhere from Heathrow, and arrived back in London two weeks later via Rome, Athens and God knows where else, but nowhere near Finland."

Forced to wait in Stockholm for a connection to Turku, most of the entourage decided to take in the cultural delights of Stockholm. "We had a big spliff in a churchyard," recalls Sandy. Boss remained in the airport to get drunk with a fellow roadie, but, failing to account for the high price of alcohol in Scandinavian airports, ran out of money after the second drink.

For the flight from Sweden to southern Finland, Paul rolled a massive spl iff that Sandy remembers "hiding behind the newspapers, trying to toke it, and toke it, and toke it, as the plane landed." They passed through customs without incident and met half of Canned Heat and their entourage on the bus that would take them to their accommodation. A roadie for Canned Heat introduced himself: "I've got some crystal meth, you want some?"

"I don't think I slept for three days," Sandy says, "and we only did forty five minutes because we weren't headlining, but we were there . . . at Finland's first pop festival."

Paul Rudolph told underground magazine *Fapto* (Spring 1972) that Turku "was beautiful . . . When we came on stage the sky was really blue, the sun was shining and then this sea of blonde, it was wonderful."

Peace and love type sentiments were absent from the menu when the remainder of Canned Heat, whose flight had been delayed, turned up late

for meal time. It was the summer holiday and the bands were staying in the local university's equivalent of the halls of residence. Although the caterers reluctantly served the late arrivals, adhering to the strictly regimented refectory opening hours they wasted no time in clearing away the plate of Canned Heat drummer Fito de la Parra before he had finished. When the caterers refused to return his food, de la Parra allegedly pulled a knife, and a battle ensued between Finnish catering staff and a number of musicians, including Jeff Beck's brother. Despite the threat of knives and a machete, no one came to any serious harm in the end. Pumped up on adrenaline (and crystal Methedrine), all the bands that night played blinding sets.

Russell remembers that someone, not the Pink Fairies, threw a television set out of a very high window, which served to outrage the Finnish police, who kept a vigilant watch over proceedings thereafter. This would be the least of the Fairies' concerns, whose woes had started when leaving Heathrow and would conclude on their return. Russell remembers the incident like this:

> *The most ironic thing was the journey home, which was where all Paul's immigration problems began, and it all could have been avoided if he'd been* a *bit quicker off the mark. At Heathrow, we found ourselves being waved through immigration by anxious looking security guards, which we thought was very odd, then twigged that they thought we were Rod Stewart and the Faces who were expected back at the same moment. One bunch of longhairs looked just like another to them, and airport staff were trying to smuggle them away from the crowds of adoring fans that had gathered at the terminal. Paul was so perplexed, that he insisted on going out of his way to point out he wasn't anything to do with Rod Stewart, showed his passport and visa to them, so they realised the visa was out of date, and all the aggravation started.*

Not too long after the Finnish trip came an excursion to Germany, where the Pink Fairies were booked to play a week long residency at the Zoom Club in Frankfurt. The first major incident occurred before they reached Germany. In a new Mercedes van, with driver provided by the MAM agency for the occasion, the entourage were pulled over by customs

officers on the French and Belgian border. The band were an obvious target for the customs officers, as indeed they were for the police and anyone else. "You've got to remember," says Ian Lee, "that this was the time of the Baader-Meinhoff and all that kind of thing."

The band and road crew were summarily searched and nothing was found except for a mouldy old raisin in the pocket of Paul Rudolph's jacket that customs officers mistook for hashish. Satisfied they had grounds to undertake a more detailed search, the Pink Fairies entourage was detained. Unbeknownst to the band, the driver of the new Mercedes van had stashed away several ounces of cannabis. "What we didn't know," says Sandy, "was that this driver was transporting on behalf of somebody else, because there was quite a lot of that going on . . . independent roadie companies were transporting stuff . . . there were deals going on that the bands didn't know about. It happened on more than one occasion, but we found out in hindsight that we were eminently bustable, and we didn't even know it was going on!"

Ian Lee recalls being stopped and "the driver got out of the driving seat, and the customs guy had his arm right on it . . . and he's looking and looking, and he's got his elbow right where [the dope is hidden], leaning on the steering column."

Emptying the van of the equipment, and taking off the door panels to no avail, customs finally resigned themselves to having nothing on the band but a mouldy raisin, and sent them on their way. Arriving with an hour to spare before going on stage, the first Pink Fairies performance in Frankfurt was terrible. Boss told *UHCK* magazine: "Setting up and playing without a soundcheck didn't help what was a shit gig . . . dreadful sound, no punters to talk of, hence the promoter wasn't much fun."

Russell adds: "Some German heavy pulled a gun on us when we tried to get paid. I don't really know what happened next, but somehow we got paid and the guy tried to pass it all off as a joke, but he certainly wasn't joking at the time."

"The weird thing about it," recalls Ian Lee, "there was a screen behind us, and they continually played *Planet of the Apes* over and over again!"

What A Bunch Of Sweeties LP cover featuring a collection of Boss Goodman's counterculture badges, and other paraphernalia associated with the underground (LP cover photo by Penn in Smith)

Main image: Jenny Ashworth and Russell Hunter, Powis Square, circa late winter/early spring 1970 (Photograph courtesy of Jenny Ashworth)
Inset: Sandy with bass guitar when police and management call a halt to an MC5, Pink Fairies and Third Ear Band gig at Seymour Hall, London, March 1972 (Photograph by Captain Snaps [Joe Stevens], courtesy of Tim Rundall)

part three

What a Bunch of Sweeties

Paul Rudolph's appeal against deportation began in earnest in the autumn of 1971. The underground press wasted no time in highlighting the guitarist's

plight, and *IT* printed a full page ad entitled "Hands off freaks!" The band tried to put Rudolph's troubles to one side and drafted in Trevor Burton as second guitarist. Previously with the Move, Burton had formed a band called Balls and moved into Ladbroke Grove when the Move split up.

The band was also jamming with Paul Kossoff (from Free) and Chris Wood (formerly of Traffic) at around this time, an association based entirely on geographical proximity and not some conscious decision for one musician to seek out another. Playing alongside Burton, Kossoff and Wood instilled in Rudolph a greater sense of creative freedom. Not obvious to anyone else at the time, the seeds of discontent had been sown and Paul Rudolph would reassess his long term options with the Pink Fairies. "To a certain extent," says Sandy, "Rudolph was playing with more talented musicians, and obviously the limitations, shall we say, of the Pink Fairies weighed a bit heavier on him, and consequently he was trying to achieve a new direction."

Kossoff occasionally guested at Pink Fairies gigs. The first time Kossoff played with the band, at the Gay Liberation Front ball at Camden Town Hall, he proceeded to kick all his gear over, outraged that the plugs had been pulled on them. Boss recalls another occasion when Kossoff, out of it on Mandrax, managed to strike one discordant note and promptly collapsed before the set had even begun. Kossoff died of a heart attack brought on by a heroin overdose a few years later. His use of Mandrax reflected a trend that had reached epidemic proportions by the early 1970s.

The deportation threat to Paul Rudolph may have had a bearing on the decision to bring in Trevor Burton as a second guitarist, but Burton only played a handful of gigs with the Fairies before he left the band. He was present for the recording of the BBC *In Concert* programme in the autumn of 1971, and was around long enough to make a contribution to two tracks on their next album, *What a Bunch of Sweeties.*

Boss put forward one reason for Burton's early departure, telling UHCK in 1994: "[Burton's] ego was such he had to upstage everyone and in doing so simply got in the way of Rudolph's solos, consequently he didn't last long in the line up." Burton himself says otherwise, intimating he was only ever a floating member of the Fairies anyway, and that his heroin habit

precipitated an early return to his native Birmingham out of concerns for his health.

The appeal fund for the *Nasty Tales* trial picked up pace after Christmas, and a series of Nasty Balls were staged at a nightclub called Bumpers in Coventry Street in the West End. Appearing at the first of these, held on February 2, 1972, were Hawkwind, Pink Fairies (who had spent the day recording material for *What a Bunch of Sweeties),* Bishop's Big Boppers (the latest band for former Deviants guitarist Sid Bishop), Steve Took, Skin Alley, Blackheath Foot N Death Men, Sonic 7, Brinsley Schwarz and Linda Lewis.

In their report of the event, *IT* stated that "by 11.00 half the audience, including gold lame rock stars, greasy punks, hookers, and Angels (and the New York Police Department) were well ripped . . . by two, many bon viveurs were on the floor too, but the nite rattled away with manic thrills."

Apparently only half of the 1,100 attendees had actually paid to get in and *IT* requested of those who had "managed to blag your way past gullible door staff, and had a good time, send yer bread to *Nasty Tales* Defence Fund . . . Remember it's to keep the boys from the slammer!"

Committed for trial by jury, Mick and Joy Farren, Edward Barker and Paul Lewis were now the "Nasty Four." Paul Rudolph on the other hand won his appeal against deportation. He says: "I'd had a temporary visa and it had expired, so I applied [for a Residents' Permit] because my grandparents on my mother's side were born in London, and then once I'd gone through the proper channels — which took a while — I actually got a Residents' Permit to come and go anytime." The Pink Fairies pressed on with recording their new album.

They booked into Island Studios, on Basing Street, in the shadow of the Westway, and commenced recording on February 2, 1972, with Walk Don't Run. A live favourite, this cover of a Johnny Smith song had originally been mooted for inclusion on the first album but dropped; its resurrection here is perhaps indicative of a lack of original material. Once again, as much time was spent writing and rehearsing in the studio as it was recording. "We'd write, as we smoked, as we worked," says Sandy.

On the road as much as they were, the band often didn't have the time to set up their own rehearsal space. "We didn't need to because we were always playing live anyway," recalls Sandy, adding, "That's why, in a way, the set became quite rigid . . . it was quite hard to get a new song in because we were always playing the old ones, and in fact things would usually come out of the dressing room tune up. That would be when we practiced — just before the gig — and if it worked we'd try it that night". Boss recalls the band's cavalier attitude to rehearsals: " 'Ho, ho, ho, shall we go to rehearsals, ho, ho, ho' — It didn't happen! The Pink Fairies never fucking rehearsed! *What a Bunch of Sweeties* is an ad hoc album. . . . OK, some people had some ideas, but you'd go in and spend a fortune on recording time rehearsing, when you should have rehearsed it in the rehearsal studio . . . then put it on record."

The production credits are listed solely as "Pink Fairies" and, despite a lack of rehearsals, the album is a vast improvement on *Never Never Land* in terms of production and superior musicianship. Highlights are the eight minute Right On, Fight On, Portobello Shuffle (both of which Burton played on) and the live favourites Walk Don't Run and another cover, the Beatles' I Saw Her Standing There.

Underpinned by an environmental message, Right On, Fight On (originally called That Was It) relates the tale of police busting one of the previous summer's free shows under the Westway. Portobello Shuffle, as the title suggests, depicts the daily routine of an average Ladbroke Grove freak as he crawls out of bed and wends his muggy, hungover way to Finch's or Henneky's, prime freak pubs on Portobello.

The Pigs of Uranus is a hilarious piece of hillbilly style hoedown, which shows off Rudolph's lead guitar to brilliant effect. Taking its lyrics from a Gilbert Shelton Wonder Warthog cartoon strip (reproduced in *Nasty Tales),* the lead guitar break developed out of a jam during the live Uncle Harry and Walk Don't Run.

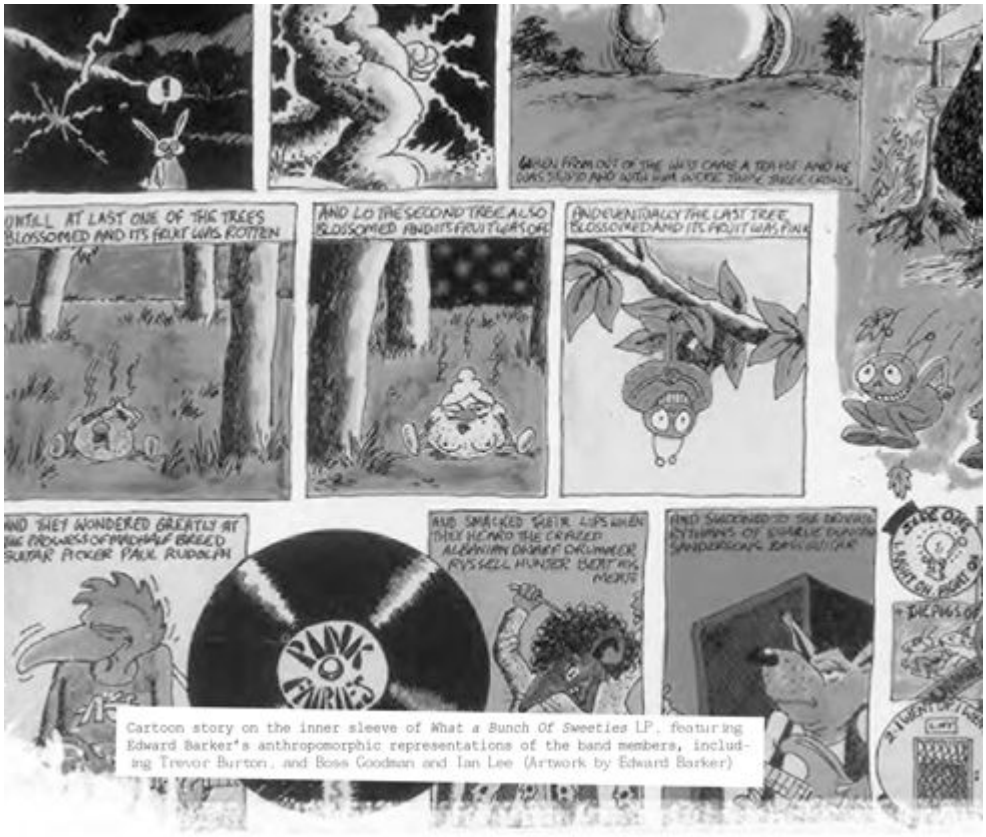
Prologue was the album's opener, consisting of a fictional dialogue between the band and a promoter offering a gig on Uranus. Russell cringes at some of the comedic aspects of the recorded output of the Deviants and Pink Fairies. "I never much cared for that sort of thing generally," he says.

“As break up hilarious as it seems at the time, it never lasts well and it just sounds contrived and embarrassing later.”

Although the packaging was not quite as lavish as that of *Never Never Land,* the combined efforts of Edward Barker and Pennie Smith nevertheless resulted in one of the most memorable Pink Fairies album covers. Pennie took the excellent cover photograph of a carefully arranged pile of underground paraphernalia, comprising badges, button pins, pills, joint roaches, Rizla packets and other drug taking accoutrements (belonging to Boss); Barker was responsible for the eye catching colour cartoon strip story of the band and the two roadies that adorned the inside double gatefold sleeve.

On top of the recording sessions throughout February and early March, the Pink Fairies still found time to support the White Panthers. In a White Panther Party UK report from March 1972, spokesman John Carding stated: “We bring our music to our communities with revolutionary, high energy bands like the Pink Fairies. Our lifestyle becomes our politics, our politics our lifestyle.”

One benefit for the Glasgow chapter of the White Panthers in February, however, was a fiasco from the outset. The promoters had advertised Hawkwind on the same bill, but Hawkwind, scheduled to play in Redcar that night, knew nothing about it. The Pink Fairies played to an air of discontent from an audience expecting Hawkwind and one of the legendary Pinkwind performances. This gig was followed by Paul Rudolph being busted with a small amount of cannabis resin. Released on bail, Rudolph would nonetheless have to travel back to Scotland to be formally cautioned. Although a relatively minor offence, he would almost certainly have been deported if he hadn’t already won his appeal. It was an inconvenience for sure, but Rudolph refutes the suggestion by Boss and Ian Lee that Glasgow was an influence on his growing dissatisfaction with the group. More likely a reason was the proliferation of drug use within the band.


UNTIL AT LAST ONE OF THE TREES BLOSSOMED AND ITS FRUIT WAS ROTTEN
AND LO THE SECOND TREE ALSO BLOSSOMED AND ITS FRUIT WAS OK
AND EVENTUALLY THE LAST TREE BLOSSOMED AND ITS FRUIT WAS PINK
AND THEY WONDERED GREATLY AT
AND SMACKED THEIR LIPS WHEN
PINK FAIRIES

Cartoon story on the inner sleeve of *What a Bunch Of Sweeties* LP, featuring Edward Barker's anthropomorphic representations of the band members, including Trevor Burton, and Ross Goodman and Ian Lee (Artwork by Edward Barker)

AND LO THE TREES JUST STOOD
AND THE PINK FAIRY GUYS FELL UPON ITS ALL THE CREATURES OF THE FOREST WHO NAMED IT "DOVE" AND COULDN'T GET ENOUGH OF IT
AND BEHOLD! THE CREATURES OF THE FOREST SAT AROUND AND SCRATCHED THEIR FEET EATING OF THE FRUIT OF THE MARIJUTREE AND LO THEY WERE BORED
AND SO IT CAME TO PASS THAT ONE DAME AMONG THEM WHO WAS THE NEW FAIRIES AND LO THEY REJOICED
TREVOR BURTON PLAYED TASTY LICKS
FRANK AT ISLAND STUDIOS DID THE OLE ENGINEERING
AND OF COURSE THE DYNAMIC DUO OF THE ROAD, DAVE (BOSS) AND IAN = PIGGY N' PINCY
DOO DAH DOO DAH
PUBLISHING BY M.A.R.
ALL TITLES PINK FAIRIES (LIMITED) EXCEPT -
WILLIE DON'T RUN -
JOHNNY SMITH ARE PINK FAIRIES
PIGS OF URAN U.S. -
FAIRIES - GIL SHECTON.
I SAW HER STANDING THERE -
LENNON
MOTT ARTHER
BAD

As the 1970s progressed, in addition to heroin, Mandrax came to replace Methedrine as the focus of a new moral panic sweeping the underground. Mandrax was a prescription drug more freely available than heroin, a hypnotic used as a sleeping tablet, that in large doses, or in conjunction with alcohol, could prove to be fatal. The Deviants were notorious for their use of Methedrine and, suffice to say, the Pink Fairies didn't shy from Mandrax and heroin. Jenny Ashworth says:

> *Mandrax hit the Grove just before we left Powis Square and moved into Bassett Road. It kind of pulled at the fabric of everyone's life in the oddest way . . . It suddenly freed us up to . . . well, sleep with all the people we'd always wanted to. You'd think that was happening all through the sixties but it hadn't . . . I think that's what finally did it for Russell and me . . . It was certainly a lot more laid back than all the speed. But sadly it caused the deaths of so many people. It was* a *really insidious drug, so innocent but so dangerous . . . Mandrax was everywhere. The legend was that*

someone who worked in the Mandrax factory used to throw huge bottles over the wall to someone waiting on the other side. We didn't take them all the time at first. I think after Russ and I split it may have got more so.

Paul Rudolph was increasingly content to limit his drug use to smoking cannabis and the occasional hit of acid. Sandy and Russell however were not. In a previously unpublished interview with Jonathon Green for his book *Days In The Life,* Russell admitted that by the beginning of 1972 his own drug use was escalating. It was also around this time that he split up with Jenny Ashworth and moved to 100 Cambridge Gardens to share a flat with an American girl called "Mad Cathy," and several others. By his own admission Russell was then heavily into heroin, and was experiencing his first real problems with it. After Mad Cathy moved out, Steve Took moved in. In 1987, Russell told Jonathon Green: "[Took would] do awful things in the bathroom, take smack and get pretty disgusting. Every now and again these little runaways would arrive from strange parts of the country, all in love with Took, so he was forever harbouring underage runaways. The police would come: 'Have you seen this girl?' 'No, man.' 'Fine.'"

Russell, who has been off heroin since 1981, is frank about his habit and its part in Rudolph's departure from the Pink Fairies:

Paul was definitely unhappy about my increased consumption of smack, and what was really a *fascination with needles for me — whatever it was I wanted to inject it. Understandably, he found this seriously disgusting and wanted to put distance between it and himself. And I don't suppose it was doing much for consistency in whatever drumming ability I had. So, yes, I believe it was quite* a *big factor in his departure.*

Hawkwind's Nik Turner is critical of what he believes was a glorification of drug use by the Pink Fairies:

I think the pre-occupation with drugs, and that sort of imagery — they were all pictured like heroin addicts or something [on the Kings of Oblivion *poster] — was pretty tasteless really, and I think*

that might have even been conducive towards them losing some of their audience as well. 'Cos generally speaking hard drugs weren't the acceptable norm for people. People liked psychedelic drugs and liked peace and love and stuff. There was more of a sort of a *community vibe and I think that's what Hawkwind tended to have, and I think the Pink Fairies had it, but I think when speed, or other harder drugs took over some members of the Pink Fairies became victims of that sort of thing.*

Neither Boss nor Sandy think that drug use within the Pink Fairies ever really became a problem; it rarely hindered their ability to play gigs, and in some respects may have even enhanced their reputation. Russell is more philosophical about the subject, and says: "Sometimes they added something, sometimes they didn't, and whether they held us back in the long run is an impossible question to answer. I don't think you'll find very many bands of our era who weren't at some time or another taking something or other, on and off stage." He muses: "It wasn't a big deal then, and if you take away the hysterical nonsense talked about the subject, occasional responsible recreational drug use isn't a big deal now."

Russell stresses that heroin certainly never added anything to a performance, but adds wryly, "it filled in the gaps between quite pleasurably, for a while at least!" Twink believes drugs were detrimental to the Pink Fairies. "It certainly hindered my progress with the band," says Twink. "I think if I hadn't overindulged so much, and sort of concentrated on music rather than the sex and the drugs, then that might have contributed to a more musical progression for me within the band."

Says Paul Rudolph: "Leading up to when I left, drugs and alcohol were becoming a problem and it was hindering the performance of the band at various times, you know? People just not being able to keep it together at all. It was getting too carried away. Too loose."

Having seen his fair share of lives destroyed by heroin over the years, Nik Turner is well disposed to comment on the dangers of the drug, and uses Steve Took as a prime example:

I had him living with me for about a year [in the mid seventies], and I was looking after him in Kent . . . I got him right off drugs, got him on healthy foods, I even got him swimming in the sea at one point, but as soon as he got back to London, he'd just go back to his old ways. It was the company he was keeping. He became like 'the fool,' you know? He'd go round some dealer's house, and they'd go, 'Hello Stevie, try this! Have one of these, take this. . . . Oh! He's still standing up . . . have another one of these!' They just gave him more and more drugs to see how much he could take.

Ian Lee recalls attending a gig by Took at Leicester University: "[Took had] taken a bit too many downers, and so he had to take some uppers. . . . He didn't really know where he was, and he got on stage. . . . He was very slow and the audience knew he was out of it, and they started throwing stuff, and after a while he started to take off and get a bit faster, but by this time that was the end of it. He just stopped and in his stoned state he just got off the stage."

It was a familiar pattern of drug taking and drinking that would remain with Took until his death in 1980.

'Well, Well, Well' - Sandy (left) and Mick Wayne, circa 1972 (Photograph courtesy of Duncan Sanderson) Inset: Programme cover for Wembley Festival of Music, October 28-29, 1972. Pink Fairies supported the New York Dolls and Rod Stewart and The Faces on the Sunday.

part four

Uncle Blackie's Last Freakout

One of the last gigs that Paul Rudolph played for the Pink Fairies was a support slot for the MC5 in March 1972. Promoted by Fun and Games in collaboration with the White Panthers, the gig was held at Seymour Hall. The venue was not used to hosting rock bands, and the staff did not take kindly to the audience attracted by the MC5, Pink Fairies and the Third Ear Band. A strict curfew of 11.30pm had been imposed on the music. Headliners MC5, who were due to start at 10.30pm, didn't arrive until 11.15pm and went on stage to perform just one number before the curfew came into effect. By which time the police had been called anyway. Earlier in the evening, the management insisted on having the house lights on throughout the Pink Fairies' set. Fun and Games promoter Lew Kaut explained to *Frendz:* "The lites were turned on because the Seymour Hall management didn't like the volume of sound the Fairies, in particular Paul, who outplayed the MC5 to a standstill, were puttin' out."

At the end of April a second Nasty Ball was held at Bumpers. The Pink Fairies didn't play because they were adding the finishing touches to their latest recording, but the band was represented by Russell Hunter and Steve Took, who arrived brandishing pig heads impaled on poles. "We went to the butcher in Portobello Road and bought two pigs heads for 50p," says Russell, "stuck them on broomsticks and pinned cloaks around the tops of their heads. When the cloak fell open the head was revealed in all its gory glory. I think the symbolism speaks for itself in the context of the times."

Once again, the event wasn't very successful in terms of fundraising, and the organisers were lucky to break even, thanks largely to the bands playing for minimum expenses. These included Nektar, Skin Alley, Help Yourself, Bishop's Big Boppers and, as *IT* put it, "last but not least, Steve Took, the west London necrophiliac." Of the other highlights, *IT* reported "Farren and Twink doing Johnny B. Goode with ex-Deviant Bishop's Big Boppers, Edward wearing a chair, a £200 coke giveaway, and White Panthers pissing on policemen."

Iggy Pop attended the event, looking to recruit a band in Britain. Twink's name as a drummer had supposedly been put forward by David Bowie. Nothing came of it though, and Iggy returned to the States.

Having got his "head together" for the new year, Twink was back from Morocco and living in Cambridge, where he was involved with a number of projects on the local music scene, as well as occasionally standing in on drums for Hawkwind when Terry Ollis was too incapacitated to play.

The most famous of Twink's post Pink Fairies projects however was Stars, a trio consisting of Twink, Jack Monck and former Pink Floyd frontman Syd Barrett. Stars played several gigs in the winter and spring of 1972, including a disastrous show with the MC5 at Cambridge Corn Exchange. Stars fell into disarray when a less than complimentary review of the performance appeared in the press. Twink remembers: "I think it was the *NME*. [Syd] was very unhappy with it. He had it in his hands and came round to where I was living in Cambridge and said, 'I don't want to play anymore.'"

Until the bad review, Twink says that all of Stars were optimistic about the band's future. At the time of the Corn Exchange gig, Stars had already been booked for a subsequent gig at Essex University with Kevin Ayers.

Twink recruited a young guitarist called Alan Lee Shaw to fill in for Syd on guitar. "[Stars] attempted to do the gig without Syd, which was a bit silly, but there was commitment to be there," says Twink. "It turned out to be a disaster, 'cos they weren't really interested if Syd wasn't there, so we just hung around there and raised hell in the sense we got pretty stoned and drunk."

The dissolution of Stars coincided with Paul Rudolph's departure from the Pink Fairies, who finally dropped his bombshell in the spring of 1972. Rudolph's departure was met with no big announcement in the music press, or even the underground press for that matter, and Rudolph played his last gig at a club in Southend in May 1972.

Russell and Sandy went back to London after the gig, while Boss, Rudolph and Ian Lee drove through the night to the Bickershawe Festival in Lincolnshire, where they planned to watch the Grateful Dead and Captain Beefheart. "After Bickershawe," says Boss, "it kind of sunk in that we

didn't have a band anymore, 'Oh fuck, what am I gonna do for a living?' Not that I got much anyway, but you've obviously got to pay the rent."

Twink leaving the Pink Fairies had not been insurmountable, after all the band still had a drummer in Russell, but the departure of Paul Rudolph was a completely different matter. By the time *What a Bunch of Sweeties* was released in July the Pink Fairies had effectively ceased to be. With no guitarist the band was unable to promote the album. And to rub salt into the wound, their old running mates Hawkwind went and scored a surprise number two chart hit with Silver Machine. Boss says: "Only hindsight tells you that Rudolph should have hung on for another three months or so and it would've been alright I think, but you never know. . . . Rudolph was such a good guitar player . . . and when he left it ruined my life!"

Unable to comprehend working for another band, Boss began writing a cookery column in *IT* called "Uncle Chuckle's Pud Page." Frequently tongue in cheek, the recipes often carried fantastic names and were sometimes derived from experiences on the road with his former charges. For Ian Lee, the other redundant Fairies' roadie, a life writing culinary columns wasn't an option, and he continued to do what he enjoyed best — being a roadie — and went freelance again.

With future plans as the Pink Fairies being on hold, Russell and Sandy participated in a recording session with Steve Took at Olympic Studios in Barnes, July 1972. Both Took and Russell had developed considerable heroin habits, and Russell recalls that "Took refused to walk through the studio door unless we were both severely smacked out, which led to a lot of mutual mumbling, and nodding out standing up against the walls mid song. It was a disgrace really, they should have just thrown us out."

Russell continues: "Once we had a 10am meeting with Took's manager, Tony Secunda, which meant we were grubbing around Chinatown at 8.30 in the morning trying to score. We got taken to the back of a car showroom in Park Lane, got the stuff, spent £20 in a fancy patisserie, got to Tony's place in Fulham, ate the cakes, and threw up all over his bathroom and passed out for four hours. After that, Tony always made sure he met us somewhere else. Preferably outside."

Took did manage to pick up the mantle of guitarist and singer and "get a few parts of songs down." Russell says that Took "had some quirky oddly touching lyrics amongst all the mayhem and sleaze."

The fruits of the session were Blind Owl Blues, Mr Discreet, and a revamped electric version of an earlier Shagrat song, Amanda. Second guitar accompaniment was provided by Mick Wayne, who was the husband of Charlotte, a friend of Sandy's girlfriend, Lucia. "Charlotte was a big time coke dealer whose world later went terribly wrong," recalls Russell. "Mick [Wayne] was very keen, a bit self consciously super hip, but basically a very nice guy."

Mick Wayne had an impressive pedigree as a musician and enjoyed a modicum of underground success. In addition to a stint with Junior's Eyes, Wayne had been associated with Joe Cocker's Mad Dogs and Englishmen tour in the United States. Things didn't work out in the States and Wayne returned to England, as much at a loose end as Russell and Sandy until the Olympic Studios sessions.

During these sessions, *What a Bunch of Sweeties* was posthumously released. It reached the giddy heights of number forty eight in the album charts. Receiving favourable reviews in both the music weeklies and underground press, it seems the Pink Fairies had finally attained the mainstream critical success that had so far eluded them. In his review for *Record Mirror,* Charles Webster wrote: "The Fairies probably mean more to the average music fan than any of yer actual superstars as they actually go out and play to, for, and with an audience. If they ever get it together as a trendy band with the right people behind them, the Fairies could well become the British equivalent of the Mothers."

Steve Peacock, for *Sounds*, paid more of a backhanded compliment when he wrote: ". . . raucous untutored rock'n'roll music blowing it all apart. Dirty sound, freaked out punk rock, chords blasting away, insane mumblings about people wanting the Pink Fairies to do gigs on Uranus, and the final indignity — a lovingly recreated demo tape sound on I Saw Her Standing There as purveyed by the early Beatles. Out of my way Fairies, I'll never get in Pseuds Corner listening to crap like this — No wait, perhaps just one more time."

Invariably biased, the underground press were reasonably objective, and Chris Rowley in *IT* delivered a eulogy for the Pink Fairies and a review of the album all in one. Rowley praised *What a Bunch of Sweeties* and in particular its more "rocking numbers," such as Right On, Fight On and Portobello Shuffle — "The kind of stuff that idiot dancers just love to twitch to." Rowley rounds off by saying: "All in all it's a long way ahead of their previous record and a good indicator of how they could have continued to improve had the band carried on. If you went to their gigs and dug them, then get this to remember them by."

With the relative success of the album that summer, Sandy turned his thoughts to reforming the Pink Fairies. Sandy found a replacement for Paul Rudolph on guitar in Mick Wayne, and any ideas that Steve Took may have had with regards to a band of his own were dashed in the process. Nick Kent of the *NME* wrote that "the intrepid Fairy rhythm section considered forming a band with Marc Bolan's old playmate [Steve Took] . . . until it was ascertained that young Steve was temporarily incapable of doing anything at all." "Took was quite bitter about it," says Russell, "claiming that Bolan had stolen his first band, and now the Fairies had stolen his second." Russell considers Took's statement to be quite unjustified, as this "band" to which Took refers "never existed as more than a concept, and if there was one person who was more incapable at the time than I, it was Steve."

In August, *IT* heralded the return of the Pink Fairies: "It seems that a new Pink Fairies band, minus Paul Rudolph (with the mighty MAM agency backing them up) will make their first live appearance at London's Lyceum on August 27."

The trio of Rudolph, Twink and Trevor Burton were mooted to be forming a band called the Fairies, and while they did make several appearances together, it was not under that name but as the 10p Boogie Band, at the Fisher Hall in Cambridge. "I used to run a little gig there," says Twink, "and we used to charge 10p to get in . . . We played there a couple of times with me on drums, Paul on lead guitar, but it wasn't like a solid, 'Let's get this band together and go for it!'"

After what must have seemed like the end, Hunter and Sanderson were flying again as the Pink Fairies. Not only had they renegotiated their

contract with Polydor, obviously impressed by Wayne's pedigree, they had also recruited a new manager: bizarrely enough, it was their original manager, Robert Orbach, who had helped broker the initial deal with Polydor back in 1970, and then was sacked. The band also recruited their old roadie, Boss, and another friend from the Grove, John Manly. Boss wasn't expecting to have to be interviewed by Robert Orbach however, and asserts: "It was a different scene, you know? It wasn't like the family set up that we'd had previously. It was slightly more business orientated with this fucking horrible git Orbach as the guy running the show."

The underground press had lamented the demise of the Pink Fairies in the summer, but by August were heralding their return.

Mick Wayne didn't actually play many gigs with the Pink Fairies. Russell Hunter is of the opinion that he only actually played one gig with them. The reality is that there was a long excruciating autumn tour. "Asgard booked us out on a tour," says Boss. "All the big places we played . . . good 1,000 capacity places all over the country, and they'd be all sold out virtually, or doing good business, but by the end of the band's set the places would be mainly empty, and there'd be just a very confused bunch of hippies standing around going 'Who was that, man? What fucking happened? Where's Uncle Harry and all the rest of it?'"

The fans' dissatisfaction with the Mick Wayne line up was highlighted by a letter in *IT* from one Peter Kendall from Beckenham. He wrote:

> *After seeing the 'new' Pink Fairies, I am writing to warn 'old' Pink Fairies addicts about the new group. Don't go expecting the old Fairies cause they ain't. How they got the nerve to call themselves the Pink Fairies I don't know. They sounded just the same as about* a *million other second rate support groups. This new set up is just a rip off cashing in on the name, and doing* a *bad job of it at that. So if you must go on, Messrs Sanderson, Hunter and Wayne, either change your name or bring Paul Rudolph (the latter would be the best solution). Up the Pinks.*

Conversely, another diehard Fairies fan thought they could do no wrong. Lester Pope of Tulse Hill apologised for fucking up the Pink Fairies set at

the Roundhouse, Dagenham, after taking too much acid, banging his head and proceeding to jump on the stage, "trying to play their drums, clambering all over their equipment and generally looning about." Lester Pope continued in considerable hyperbolic fashion to explain just what the Pink Fairies meant to him:

> *Jus' everything. I've been livin', eatin' 'n sleepin' the Pink Finks for a couple of* years *now. Not because of some sort of blind, hysterical devotion (though very nearly!) but that you can get it on like no other band. When you let rip with your own brand of rock'n'roll nothing matters but your music. Euphoria shudders its way thru my body with every vibe you generate, and an inane grin creeps across me face I can only think Pink an' that's all I wanna do.*

If this microcosm of opinion indicated that Pink Fairies fans were split over the merits of the new line up, those closer to the band were equivocal. Both Sandy and Russell soon realised what a big mistake they had made. "We knew it wasn't working even before the first gig," says Russell.

The Pink Fairies were booked to play a show at Wembley Empire Pool, sharing the bill with Rod Stewart and the New York Dolls. Organised by the Stars Organisation for Spastics in conjunction with the *Daily Express* newspaper, it not only turned out to be one of the highest profile gigs for the Pink Fairies, but one of the last that Wayne would play with the band. (It was also the last gig for New York Dolls drummer Billy Murcia, who overdosed in his London hotel room a few days later.)

Larry Wallis, former Entire Sioux Nation and Shagrat guitarist, was drafted in by the band to help with the guitar sound, which was considered "a bit thin." He ended up replacing Mick Wayne.

"It was a fucking struggle," says Sandy of Mick Wayne's brief tenure with the Pink Fairies, "and I don't think he felt comfortable either . . . think Wayne was in the wrong band."

'What's your oblivion?' - The poster given away with initial copies of the Kings of Oblivion LP
KINGS OF OBLIVION
KINGS OF OBLIVION

part five

What's Your Oblivion?

Opposite, main image: 'The Nasty Four' (l-r) Mick Farren, Joy Farren (holding *Nasty Tales*), Edward Barker (back), Paul Lewis. Inset: 'In the dock' - IT Nasty Tales Trial cover, featuring a galaxy of underground cartoon heroes, including the Ruff Tuff Cream Puff, Bo Bo Bolinski, Mr Natural, Freak brothers Fat Freddy & Phineas, Ogoth & Ugly Boot, and Edward Barker's representations of himself and Mick Farren . . . and not forgetting the Largactilite in the bottom left hand corner (IT, Dec 14, 1972–Jan 10, 1973)

Larry Wallis was born on May 15, 1948, in south London, and received his first guitar on his ninth birthday. He wanted an electric guitar, but his father told him he had to learn to play his acoustic guitar first. When he was twelve, an aunt took him to see Cliff Richard and the Shadows. “I saw Hank Marvin wearing this red Stratocaster and that was the complete and utter demise of my education,” Larry told Nigel Cross of *Forced Exposure* in 1985. “From then on all I wanted to do was wear glasses and a red Stratocaster. So I got an electric guitar.”

It wasn’t long before he joined a band called the Saints. Larry’s growing interest in Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry ensured a shift away from the influence of the Shadows, and with the introduction of a singer to the band, the Saints became the King Bees and their transformation into a Rolling Stones style combo was complete.

Larry says that he used to help the Rolling Stones shift their gear after playing at the 51 Club, then catch a train to see them play at the Crawdaddy Club in Richmond later in the evening. Larry found employment at Selmer’s music shop on Charing Cross Road, the mecca for British beat groups at the time, where he was supposed to be a trainee soundman but ended up demonstrating guitars for customers. Larry told Nigel Cross the “job didn’t last too long because I was a raving mod at the time and they discovered that I was eating purple hearts like there was no tomorrow.”

A series of other bands followed the King Bees, including the Homegrown Blues and the Ants. The next guitarist to make a big impression on Larry was Pete Townshend, shortly followed by Jimi Hendrix. “Hendrix came along and I saw him on *Top of the Pops* doing Hey Joe — I threw up, shit myself and didn’t know what the fuck was going on! Seeing Jimi Hendrix even put Chuck Berry out of my mind for a while,” Larry told Cross.

Larry had been converted and wasted no time embracing the burgeoning hippy scene. After attending an audition for Bryan Ferry’s pre-Roxy Music band the Gas Board, he formed his first real band of any significance with Gas Board’s drummer Paul Nichols. Larry recognised a kindred spirit, mainly due to the fact they both had frizzed out long hair and wore hippy gear. Larry and Nichols were joined by Tim Taylor on bass, and Terry Nolden, ex-singer of cult mod band the Eyes. Under the name the Entire

Sioux Nation, they regularly played at hip London nightclubs such as Blaises, the Revolution Club, and The Speakeasy, which is where Larry had his first experience of the PFMGDC.

It was at the Speakeasy, “doing his best Hendrix” on stage with the Entire Sioux Nation, that Larry impressed Mick Farren and Steve Took, and was asked if he wanted to join Shagrat. Mick had a falling out with Took soon after, but Larry continued with Took and recorded a number of demo tracks (in Larry’s father’s garage). Shagrat also recorded a session at Strawberry Studios in Stockport, which included several heavier compositions cowritten by Took and Larry (these included Boo! I Said Freeze, Stainless Steel Abortion and Peppermint Flickstick). Larry told Tony Rettman in 2002: “[Shagrat] wasn’t so much a band as it was me and Took’s own world. If we coulda harnessed what we had, it woulda been awesome. But it ended up us just sitting around in rooms, doing drugs.” Shagrat’s appearance at the Phun City festival in July 1970 proved to be their most notable performance. But it was the MC5 that was the highlight of the evening as far as Larry was concerned. “When the MC5 erupted with Kick Out The Jams, I had an epiphanic moment and was never the same again,” says Larry.

Larry spent another year with Shagrat, before a short spell with Blodwyn Pig and then an early incarnation of heavy metal band UFO, with whom he toured Germany and Italy before being sacked for arguing with lead singer Phil Mogg.

It was days after his sacking from UFO that Larry received a telephone call from Mick Farren, with news that the Pink Fairies were looking for a second guitarist. Larry was reticent, having already agreed to join another band, but, plied with drink and drugs by Mick and Russell, he acquiesced and arranged to join the Pinks Fairies at a gig in St Albans. It was obvious that Larry had got the job of second guitarist the moment he plugged in his guitar and started to play. It was also apparent that Mick Wayne had to go, and the band fired him there and then.

Boss reflects: “Larry comes on and does his guitaring, and we all get together in a huddle and go, ’Mick’s gotta go — that other guy’s better, we’ve got to have him in the band.’” Russell is similarly inclined: “After

the gig, it was clear we needed Larry, and Larry and Mick in the same band wasn't going to work. So Mick went."

Russell Hunter is more benevolent towards Mick Wayne: "Who knows why some things just don't make it? It was certainly nothing to do with his ability or his attitude, or anything to do with him on a personal level. It just didn't work."

As Mick Wayne was booted out of the band, Polydor released a Pink Fairies single on which he featured. Well Well Well c/w Hold On was unlike anything the Fairies had done before, such was the extent of Mick Wayne's style. Reviewing the single in *IT,* Jerry Floyd was reasonably charitable towards Well Well Well, but of Hold On he remarked: "a much funkier track than usually heard from the Fairies, although I was somewhat aggravated by the vocals which don't really seem to fit in — it is the instrumentation which is the saving grace of this side."

Mick Wayne was not the only one to leave the band at the end of 1972. Manager Robert Orbach, having renegotiated a new contract and advance for the band with Polydor, left once again — and is rumoured to have taken with him the lion's share of financial rewards reaped by the new contract. Russell Hunter is somewhat circumspect: "I don't think we were big enough to be ripped off that badly, nor he smart enough to do it. . . . He probably took a couple of grand off us when he split, and convinced himself he'd earned it."

However, Sandy is inclined to think that most of the band's money went to supporting Orbach's mews house and two "Toyota limousines."

The Pink Fairies were quite used to doing things on their own at this stage, and probably quite difficult to deal with. Russell says: "Orbach really did nothing for us, but I doubt if anyone could have done much for us. We were out of control and equally determined not to be controlled. Lots of fun and attitude, but it's certainly not the way to make money in the business."

Ian Lee, who returned to the band as roadie at Boss's request, concurs the band was unmanageable: "They didn't like to be managed, they wanted to do things the way that they wanted all the time."

Nevertheless, the Pink Fairies wasted no time in employing Hamish Henry, along with his business partner, to manage their affairs. Henry was a

young Australian business entrepreneur who had his fingers in a number of pies, including motor racing and rock music promotion. He managed and produced the Australian band Fraternity (amongst whose members was one Bon Scott), and achieved a modicum of success for them.

The Pink Fairies continued to gig throughout December, including, bizarrely enough, Kettering Grammar School, and the Mecca ballroom in Blackpool, with the Edgar Broughton Band. They even reprised the legendary Pink Fairies Christmas party at the Roundhouse, all profits going to the *Nasty Tales* Defence Fund. The line up was advertised as follows: "Flamin' Groovies, Chilly Willy and the Red Hot Peppers (Martin Stone), The Deviants with Mick Farren, Magic Muscle (from Bristol), Twink and quite probably Brinsley Schwartz and also hopefully, Pretty Things."

It must almost have been like old times. But Paul Rudolph's departure from the Pink Fairies had heralded a move from the wider political context of the underground. By the time Larry Wallis joined, late in 1972, the Pink Fairies were certainly not the beast they had been at the beginning of the year, either politically or musically. Larry told Nigel Cross of *Forced Exposure:* "I was a good replacement but [Rudolph's] attitude was better than mine 'cos he was more steeped in the underground."

Despite the band continuing to play their fair share of benefit gigs, the times had changed yet again, and the counterculture was not as it had been at the turn of the decade. The underground press was in a state of disarray, in no small part due to the continued police harassment that resulted in the high profile obscenity trials of *Oz* and *Nasty Tales.*

Lasting two and a half weeks, the *Nasty Tales* trial began in mid January 1973. Mick Farren elected to conduct his own defence, and the "Nasty Four" were supported by a cast of defence witnesses that included feminist Germaine Greer, George Perry, the assistant editor of the *Sunday Times Magazine* and co-editor of *The Penguin Book of Comics,* and humanist H.J. Blackham. The trial proved to be a last hurrah for the underground press. Although the jury acquitted the Nasty Four on all charges of possessing obscene material for gain under the Obscene Publications Act, it was clear that the heyday of *Oz, IT* and *Frendz* had well and truly passed.

In February 1973, the Pink Fairies entered the newly built Chipping Norton studios in the Oxfordshire countryside to record their third album, *Kings of Oblivion.* With production credits going to David Hitchcock, the band set about creating what many people regard as the Pink Fairies' masterpiece. Larry Wallis was still coming to terms with being a Pink Fairy and effectively thrown in at the deep end: "What happened was we did the St Albans gig, we came off stage and Russell said, 'Mick Wayne goes and Larry's the lead singer, or I'm fucking off!' Wow, huge! And then they said to me 'You've got to write an album. Well, I'd never written a fucking song in my life!"

Despite his relative inexperience at writing music and lyrics, the burden of responsibility fell upon Larry. Most of the material was written solely by him, except for City Kids, a co-composition with Sandy, and a group composition called Chamber Maid. Another, When's The Fun Begin, was cowritten with Mick Farren, fresh from his *Nasty Tales* trial triumph.

Ian Lee remembers the recording sessions at Chipping Norton with some affection: "It was something else, the whole 'family' being there, all the women and everybody, and the women were cooking for us — so that was nice — and Boss made some nice food, and I remember Mick Farren came out and stayed for a few days."

Steve Took also drove out to the Studio on occasion, the Cosmic Family fully expecting him to deliver substances for their recreational enjoyment, but these he sometimes "lost" en route.

It turned out that Larry was a songwriter of considerable talent, and for the first time ever it seemed the Pink Fairies were knuckling down to some serious songwriting and rehearsals. Glam rock was reaching its peak of popularity in the UK and Larry's brand of glam tinged metal fitted in quite nicely with the times. The Pink Fairies underwent their second major change in musical direction in six months. The likes of Uncle Harry's Last Freakout and The Snake had already been consigned to the past as testament to the Paul Rudolph era, and certainly weren't about to be reinstated by Larry Wallis. It became apparent that the new, leaner heavy metal direction that Larry's songwriting was steering the band towards was an equally significant departure from the early Pink Fairies style.

Six weeks later, *Kings of Oblivion* was complete and consisted of seven blistering tracks. It opened with City Kids, and the barrage of Larry's "big guitar" didn't let up until the last notes of Street Urchin faded out some thirty eight minutes later. Starting life as 37 Lay Down, the now anthemic City Kids went on to become a staple of Motorhead's set, too. Of the seemingly sexual ambiguity of I Wish I Was A Girl, Larry told Nigel Cross: "everybody thought I was saying, 'I'm a homosexual. I'm a girl trapped in this man's body.' Well I wasn't. I was just saying, 'I wish I was a girl' because they get it so easy. Any girl can go home with a chap seven nights if she wants. That's why I wished I was a girl."

Then there was When's The Fun Begin, with a sinister intro, police sirens howling away in the background, and suitably opaque lyrics by Mick Farren. The album's closing track, Street Urchin, is a seven minute slab of thumping medium tempo boogie, a fitting finale to a consistently strong record. But it is Raceway, the album's sole instrumental number and opening track on side two, that stands as a highlight to this day. Raceway was originally intended to have lyrics, but during the recording of the album the label arranged a gig in Scotland, on the pretext of raising the band's profile north of the border. In their absence Polydor took the opportunity to master the record without Larry having a chance to add vocals to Raceway. The Pink Fairies were helpless to do anything about it and, according to Larry, Polydor just put it out. John Peel has cited it as one of the best cuts on the record.

Polydor's duplicity over Raceway wouldn't be the last injustice the Pink Fairies, particularly Larry, would be subjected to by the record company. Polydor even refuted that Larry was a full time member of the group. The fact that Larry Wallis receives a credit on every song on the album, not to mention that he plays on every track, and his photo appears on the album cover and all of Polydor's promotional mail outs, would more than suggest he was not just hired for the recording sessions. It is true that Larry still receives songwriting royalties as the main composer of the album, but he does not receive artist royalties. Understandably aggrieved, Larry says: "Me and Micky [Farren], or just me, wrote every fucking song on that album, and I have never ever received one penny of royalties — not one penny."

As far as Polydor were concerned when they renegotiated the deal with the Pink Fairies in the summer of 1972, the band members on the contract were Russell Hunter, Duncan Sanderson and Mick Wayne, and an advance was duly paid. On his Pink Fairies website Larry insists: "As soon as I joined I asked 'Where's me contract then?' They kept giving me The Classic Muso Deflection-Device — 'Don't worry kid. It's all being taken care of, it's all gonna be great, you're on your way to the stars baby.'"

Larry proceeded to fulfil his duties with the Pink Fairies. Unfortunately, Polydor kept prevaricating, and it never was "taken care of." It is almost as if Larry Wallis never existed, with Polydor allegedly refusing to admit he was on the album. It remains the subject of legal wrangling between Larry and Polydor, one that shows no sign of being resolved.

On the release of *Kings of Oblivion* in June 1973, Polydor's woeful track record of promoting the band didn't particularly improve, and the new album received little publicity. The Pink Fairies' resistance to being managed may also have had something to do with it. Larry recounts how they had taken no notice when new manager Hamish Henry told them: "You are a product and I'm going to market you."

Sandy recalls with amusement that Henry tried to impose an image makeover onto the band, and wanted to dress Russell in thigh high pink patent leather boots. All credit to the band for refusing the glam rock clobber favoured by the big bands of the day. But there were other glam influences afoot. At Sandy's suggestion, the name of the album was taken from a track on David Bowie's *Hunky Dory* called the Bewlay Brothers. The Pink Fairies cryptically thanked the Bewlay Brothers on the back of their sleeve, which was once again designed by Edward Barker, and depicted three pink pigs flying across a blue sky (the symbolism of flying pigs was not lost on everyone). The record was encased in a deluxe, laminated cover, with initial copies including a poster of the band depicting each member in his own choice of "oblivion." Russell's oblivion was Benedictine, and he was pictured with a green face as the liqueur was fed into his arm via an intravenous drip. Looking elegantly wasted, Sandy posed recumbent on a fully stocked bar, surrounded by bottles and optics, a cigarette louchely dangling from his fingers. Larry initially wanted to be pictured in a gambling casino by a roulette table with a gun in his hand, but

the Victoria Sporting Club, situated below manager Hamish Henry's penthouse apartment, vetoed the idea on the grounds they didn't want gambling associated with firearms.

After only a few months of managing the band, the antics of the Pink Fairies had tested Henry's patience to the limit and reduced him to tears on one occasion. Says Larry: "All we wanted from these people was money, we needed to pay our rent. They didn't have a fucking clue how to manage a rock band, and what he gave us was sixty pounds a week, but all we cared about was that we could buy marijuana . . . we just wanted to be able to buy some dope."

"We did lead Henry a merry dance for a while," confirms Russell, "and he was the perfect gentlemen about it all. When he realised he was in over his head with us he shook hands, said, 'No hard feelings, guys,' and we went our separate ways . . . Our cocaine consumption went from heroic to zeroic in one day!"

IT reported a string of dates in March for the Pink Fairies, much of which can be attributabed to overzealous journalism. Boss vaguely recalls overtures about playing in New York for a gay rights group, possibly Stonewall, but the details, as with so many things, have disappeared in the mists of time. An "extensive tour of Europe" turned out to be the "Maoist rock festival" in Paris, May 2, 1973, sharing a bill with Third World War, Arthur Brown and Pete Brown. Mick and the Pink Fairies had been asked to participate in their own right, but decided it more prudent to play together, since, as Mick puts it in his autobiography, "the negative vibes of Rudolph were not around."

The trip is notable for Mick Farren and Larry Wallis's gender bending exploits with a bunch of Parisian transsexuals, which met with the disapproval of the staunch, po-faced, left wing festival organisers, who branded the antics as counter revolutionary. After exploring the seamier side of Paris nightlife, Mick and Larry rolled up as the festival was due to start, and shrugged off their absence with the excuse, "Drunk again."

Despite a PA that resembled and sounded like an oversized transistor radio, the Pink Fairies, wrote Steve Peacock for *Sounds,* "kicked out tight

rock'n'roll with Mick Farren revelling in his rock star role, bellowing the verses and dropping to his knees for the guitar breaks."

Back in England it was business as usual, and the band played another *IT* benefit for the underground press at Wembley Empire Pool at the end of May. The Pink Fairies used the pseudonym Danny and the Racing Cars to get round a "barring clause," a ploy by promoters to prevent a band from gigging elsewhere in an area they were already booked to play.

Michael Oldfield reporting for *Melody Maker* was not very complimentary: "Danny and the Racing Cars turned out to be the Pink Fairies. They unsuccessfully covered up their alarming lack of talent with sheer noise in an abysmal performance of heavy metal music. Their set reached rock bottom with an appalling version of the Velvet Underground's I'm Waiting For My Man."

Despite undergoing a renaissance of sorts, and producing what was arguably their most accessible album to date, *Kings of Oblivion* failed to chart. Ian Lee: "It should have really taken off, and I couldn't work it out one bit why it didn't!"

Some reviewers in the mainstream music press didn't help matters. *Melody Maker* (July 7, 1973) was particularly unfair to Larry Wallis: "I've heard some bad vocalists before but they all pale into insignificance beside those on this album. Hearing the Fairies stumbling around trying to hit a note is so painful it's almost impossible to stop yourself taking the album off the turntable. Which is a great shame as they've turned into a very promising heavy metal outfit." The reviewer was gracious enough to add: "They're not the sort of band that would go down well at Princess Anne's wedding reception, but within their chosen field of loud raucous rock they're pretty adept and, instrumentally anyway, very listenable. It's no-nonsense music right the way through — if you like the riff you'll like the song."

Despite clawing back some semblance of credibility after the debacle of Mick Wayne, the tour to promote the album did little to revive the band's flagging fortunes. If anything, things were financially tighter than those very distant days of the underground, when the band would play as many free benefits and festivals as they did paying gigs. This is not to say the

Pink Fairies didn't play benefits or festivals anymore, but times had changed and the opportunity didn't present itself as much.

One opportunity was Trentishoe Festival, set in beautiful scenery on the coastline of north Devon during the summer of 1973. Trentishoe festival is notable as much for the "Muscular Pinkwind" jam as it is for the vast quantities of LSD and alcohol consumed, and the band's hired transit van breaking down on the notoriously steep Porlock Hill on the edge of Exmoor. Ian Lee eventually fixed the van (the head gasket had blown), and the band arrived at the festival site seventeen hours after leaving London to find there was hardly any alcohol. "We got there and there's no beer," reflects Boss, "so we have a whip round, and drive the van off to the local cash and carry in the nearest town, then come back and sell the beer, you know? It was Wild West time. There was no law and order. There were no boundaries."

The festival was precariously close to the edge of a cliff that had an "800 foot drop into the sea." Sandy comments on the layout of the site with some amusement: "The stage faced out to the sea . . . and a cliff, so the people who were sitting in the field were a bit off centre, as far as their view of the stage was concerned, but on stage the bands had a beautiful view out to sea — it was inspiring. But there were always things coming over the tannoy, like, 'If you've had the yellow acid don't keep walking because there's a cliff over there." Given the large quantity of pink microdot LSD tabs in circulation, things could have been messy but thankfully everyone survived and had a great time, courtesy of entertainment that included "an excellent two hour jam by the Muscular Pinkwind," Boss wrote in *IT,* "which consisted of Nik, Dave and Del from Hawkwind, Russell, Larry and Sandy of the Fairies, and Norman from Magic Muscle."

Trentishoe Festival was one of the last significant free festivals the Pink Fairies played. Although there is evidence to suggest they were scheduled to appear at the 1973 People's Free Festival at Windsor Great Park on the August Bank Holiday weekend, it is unlikely the band played. Boss believes it was one of the few occasions when the band actually pulled out of a gig and recounts the reason why: Russell Hunter had taken some acid with Steve Took who had accompanied him to the festival, and whilst laid out under a tree to shelter from the rain, a bug crawled into his ear and

proceeded to drive him crazy. The bug incident was real, confirms Russell. Sandy remembers arriving at Windsor, and waiting around for a short time before it became apparent they wouldn't be able to play with Russell on LSD with a bug in his ear. He recalls that the Fairies entourage reconvened in a local pub before heading back to London.

In an attempt to revive their flagging fortunes, the Pink Fairies invited back Twink. Despite the return of the flamboyant drummer, things were still not working out and by the end of 1973 even the once indefatigable Boss Goodman had decided to call it a day. "Boss was given the chance to manage them at that point, after all these years," recalls Ian Lee, "and he should have managed them long, long before that. He seemed to be getting on very well with the guys at Polydor." Ian continues ruefully: "We were working for next to nothing at this point, all the money went on repairs, and equipment, and Boss left, and it was all falling to bits. I couldn't see us staying in one piece without Boss around."

Boss had been offered the job of DJ by his old friend Howard "H" Parker, at the London bar and venue Dingwalls, situated in Camden Lock. He would remain there in one capacity or another for another thirteen years.

Following the departure of Boss things went from bad to worse for the band. The once solid relationship they had with MAM as their booking agency came to an end. (MAM continued to handle publishing for the Pink Fairies; Larry Wallis compositions excepted.) MAM were primarily concerned with promoting their more commercial clients, and as time progressed it became obvious they had been cancelling gigs at the expense of the Pink Fairies. Says Sandy:

> *When we were originally with MAM, we were getting good gigs — as many as we wanted. But then the whole music scene shifted, and bands like Steve Harley, and even the Kinks started to pull in an alternative crowd. I think it was only by accident that we realised that when they [MAM] said, 'That gig we had given to you, I'm afraid it's been pulled,' but then you'd look in the* NME *or* Melody Maker *and you'd find the same gig, but actually it was now someone like Cockney Rebel or the Sweet. So, the gigs weren't cancelled, they were just cancelled for us! They were rearranged*

for maybe more up and coming bands than us, and they were cheaper and could perhaps command a *better percentage. They were the forerunners of glam rock . . . and we were already out of date, and that's why we changed agencies — and there were* a *lot of them after that!*

The change of booking agencies did little to improve matters. Ian Lee confirms this, and says that after *Kings of Oblivion:* "There was no help whatsoever, it just went totally dead! It was like we were losing agencies and all kinds of stuff, and we had to search for a new agent, and gigs just weren't coming along."

It was a situation not at all helped by the energy crisis and subsequent petrol shortage in the winter of 1973, and the band found themselves having "a load of trouble" getting to the few gigs that hadn't been cancelled on them. By the beginning of 1974 tensions within the band were coming to a head.

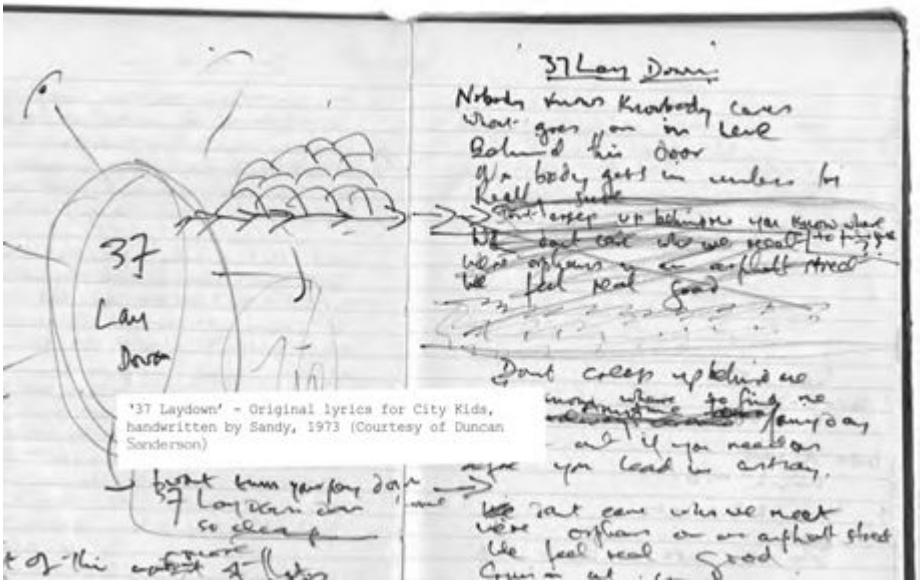
Larry told Nigel Cross in 1985: "We did a few gigs with Twink and it sounded great, but he started his old act." Explaining further: "We chucked him out again because if there was a hundred quid to be split four ways, Twink wanted two quid more than everybody else — he always wanted the fucking edge. Nothing was ever what it seemed with Twink. I don't really know what the truth is, but there's a rumour that Twink, on one lunchtime, went round to three publishers and sold the Pink Fairies' publishing to each of them. Three may be an exaggeration, but there is definitely some truth there."

Twink recalls that he left of his own accord: "I kind of got disinterested in it all. It really wasn't what I wanted to be part of . . . I left before they split, it was just totally unmanageable, and in my opinion it wasn't what the Fairies were all about."

From this period stems the ongoing animosity between Larry and Twink. Following a disagreement with Larry over the PA it would also be the last time Ian "Plymouth Pixie" Lee worked for the band. Larry accused Ian of renting out the band's PA system, unhappy with the idea that a roadie might be making money from the band on the side. Ian asserts:

It was a *hired PA system anyway, but I didn't rent it out, I lent it out to* a *roadie friend . . . I shouldn't have blown my top . . . To be quite honest if I had rented it and got* a *bit of money, I would have put it into the band anyway, and I would have got myself some food — that's how bad things were . . . we couldn't even find enough money to eat, it was that bad, it was terrible. That as far as I'm concerned was the end of the Pink Fairies.*

It was indeed. Not long after Ian Lee's departure, in March 1974, the band ground to a halt.



'37 Laydown' - Original lyrics for City Kids, handwritten by Sandy, 1973 (Courtesy of Duncan Sorderson)

part one

On Parole

Russell and Sandy were once again without a band. Sandy followed Boss into employment at Dingwalls, where he became a DJ along with former Deviant Mac. Larry went off to raise reptiles. Says Mick Farren: “There was a time when Larry had pythons, cobras, and even a bloody rattlesnake in all these aquarium tanks all over his rather small flat. Plus he raised rats to feed the snakes. It was a fucking nightmare. He’d play with them when he was drunk and we were quite convinced he was going die.”

As for Mick himself, by 1975 he had written two novels, and was working as a journalist for the *New Musical Express.* The *NME* had moved into the vacuum created by the demise of the underground press and employed the cream of the underground writers. Nick Kent from *Frendz,* and Charles Shaar Murray, one of the original *Oz* school kids had already taken the bait as part of the *NME’s* efforts to overhaul its tired old format. Mick followed them soon after.

Since his departure from the Pink Fairies, Paul Rudolph had been playing for Carol Grimes’s backing band Uncle Dog, and was earning himself a reputation as a respected session musician, working with the likes

of Sparks and Brian Eno. Closer to the Pink Fairies/Hawkwind axis, Rudolph played on Robert Calvert's album, *Captain Lockheed and the Starfighters.* Calvert was the eccentric, occasional frontman of Hawkwind. Rudolph contributed lead guitar and shared rhythm and bass guitar duties with Lemmy from Hawkwind. (Also on the album was Twink, who played the funeral drum on Catch A Falling Starfighter, and Steve Took, who provided backing vocals as part of The Ladbroke Grove Hermaphroditic Voice Ensemble. The rest of Hawkwind acted as backing musicians and were joined by special guests Brian Eno, Arthur Brown, Jim Capaldi and Vivian Stanshall.)

Rudolph and Calvert worked together again in the summer of 1974, recording two songs: Crikit Lovely Reggae and Howzatt (the latter penned by Steve Took). Calvert was again aided and abetted by sundry members of Hawkwind and ex-Pink Fairies. The plan was to release the tracks as a single to coincide with the cricket test series with the West Indies, but Calvert's record company failed to see cricket as a a commercial enough musical venture, and the recordings were shelved.

Ex-roadie Joly McFie was running the City Kids booking agency when he introduced a guitarist friend of his called John Hodge (aka Johnny "Guitar" Hodge, aka Little John) to members of the Pink Fairies. Hodge had met various members of the band before. By the time the respective parties were reacquainted, the Pink Fairies were musically inactive, John's own band, the Vapour Trails, had split up, and the idea of a musical partnership seemed a sound one. They dabbled with a variety of names, before settling upon the Psychedelic Rowdies. Sandy juggled his DJ commitments at Dingwalls, and Larry Wallis occasionally took time out from breeding reptiles to join up with Johnny and Lupino, whilst Joly McFie acted as a "tenuous" manager. They were even joined on one occasion by Steve Took. For several months throughout the latter part of 1974 the band played no more than six gigs, including the Marquee on August 4. "The train wreck that was the Psychedelic Rowdies, a band that truly lived up to their name," says Johnny Hodge. "Joly later confessed that we were the Pistols two years before the actuality but that he didn't have the necessary largesity to deal with it. The agents hated us, being as we were neither the Fairies nor the Vapour Trails." The band fizzled out and Hodge went off to form Lightning,

but it wasn't long before the spectre of the Pink Fairies reared its longmaned head once again.

Hawkwind, who had gained mainstream respectability, were going from strength to strength. It was during the second leg of their A Dead Singer tour of the UK that Hawkwind manager, Doug Smith, and Boss Goodman hatched a plan to reform the Pink Fairies. The Pink Fairies were added as the main support act for Hawkwind at the Roundhouse, on February 16, 1975. The line up was to comprise the band's finest incarnation: Paul Rudolph (guitar), Russell Hunter (drums) and Duncan Sanderson (bass). Mick Farren, writing in *NME,* stressed it was probable that Larry Wallis and Twink would "slide on stage towards the end of the performance along with the usual clutch of layabouts." Mick continued: "The idea behind the reunion is to let the Fairies go out with a bang rather than a whimper like the one almost exactly a year ago when the band slid into oblivion as Wallace [sic] went off to raise reptiles, Hunter to manage Dingwalls bar and Sanderson to do what came naturally." In conclusion, everyone agreed the gig was "a once only project, and that there's no fear of the band reforming on any permanent basis."

The important factor in the equation was the return of Paul Rudolph. Even if Twink didn't make an appearance, it was still like old times, and fans with a preference for either Paul Rudolph or Larry Wallis were treated to the spectacle of them sharing the same stage and trading licks with one another. Mick Farren even joined them for a couple of numbers, and the band played a mixture of songs from both Wallis and Rudolph's Pink Fairies catalogue (City Kids, Uncle Harry), as well as a smattering of cover versions (Waiting For My Man, Bye Bye Johnny).

The gig generated a great deal of excitement, and was a sell out. Police had to be called when about 1,000 people, unable to get in, tried burning the side entrances of the venue down, such was the clamour to see Hawkind and the Pink Fairies performing together again on the same bill.

Any hope that Paul Rudolph would figure in a Pink Fairies reunion that extended beyond a "once only project" were scuppered when Rudolph replaced Lemmy in Hawkwind. It was on a tour of North America that Hawkwind bassist Lemmy was fired from the band (following an incident at the US-Canadian border in which Lemmy was found in possession of

amphetamine sulphate), and with remarkable haste Paul Rudolph was flown over as his replacement.

Rudolph was certainly familiar with Hawkwind's earlier material, having jammed frequently with the band. His recent contribution to Robert Calvert's solo albums, and other session work as a bassist, would have helped earmark him for the job. If Lemmy being thrown out of Hawkwind for taking drugs was an unlikely sign of the times, just as bewildering to some people was the fact his replacement should come from a band with a notorious association with drugs. However, different people view different drugs in different ways, and Hawkwind's Nik Turner was of the persuasion that speed was not a good drug: "I think speed had a very detrimental effect upon people's ability to communicate really, because people get into personal agendas with amphetamines . . . and it tends to cloud the issue."

Nik had become good friends with Paul Rudolph, and was instrumental in Rudolph's recruitment to Hawkwind. Drugs had been one reason why Rudolph left the Pink Fairies, and he was further disassociating himself from certain drugs when he joined Hawkwind (whilst taking up the relatively healthy hobby of riding racing bicycles).

Another twist was added to the incredibly convoluting Fairies and Hawkwind family tree when Lemmy returned to Britain and set in motion plans for a new band. He toyed with the name Bastard, but eventually settled upon Motorhead (American slang for "speed freak"), and approached Larry Wallis to be the guitarist, ostensibly Paul Rudolph's replacement in the Pink Fairies. In an interview for a Motorhead website in 2000, Larry told Ace Trump: "I got a phone call on Friday . . . I'm sitting in my kitchen doing absolutely nothing, Lemmy phoned up, 'Hello Larry, it's Lemmy, I've formed a band called Motorhead. I'm in the rehearsal studio with a drummer right now. Do you want to join?' Hail Black Cab, I was there immediately."

Buoyed by the success of the impromptu Roundhouse reunion in February, Doug Smith and Boss saw the potential in arranging another Pink Fairies reunion cum farewell show, billing the Fairies as headliners in their own right. On July 13, 1975, the band reconvened at the Roundhouse to say goodbye once again to their fans.

Larry, Russell and Sandy were joined once more by Paul Rudolph, and erstwhile drummer Twink returned to the fold to make up the quorum necessary for a fitting "farewell" performance. It was the last time Rudolph would appear live with the other Pink Fairies. Russell reflects: "In a perfect world, both Larry and Paul would have been in the band together. I really think that would have been something, because I really rate both of them as guitar players, in very different ways — and they both epitomise two different sides of the band." Says Sandy: "There are probably a lot of people who remember the Fairies with Paul Rudolph best, but there is an equal number of people who would say the Fairies with Larry Wallis. . . . Me and Russell were quite lucky because we played with two exceptional people."

However much he enjoyed the 1975 Roundhouse reunions, Rudolph says he wouldn't have rejoined the Pink Fairies, regardless of his commitments to Hawkwind, Larry Wallis had already begun rehearsing with the prototype Motorhead, so there was definitely a sense of finality in the air. If the Fairies were going to bow out, they were planning to do it in style, and the Island Mobile Recording Unit was hired to record the July concert for posterity (part of it was released in 1982 by Big Beat). Prior to the gig, and right up to it, the Pink Fairies' entourage, including band members, roadies, girlfriends and other acquaintances, set about the mammoth task of rolling hundreds of joints of cannabis to throw into the audience. In homage to their reputation of yore, the road crew suspended a huge prop in the form of a polystyrene Mandrax, the letters MX inscribed across it.

Speaking to Nigel Cross, Larry recalled how the Pink Fairies had acquired an amount of pephedrine, a stimulant derived from the plant ephedra, resembling amphetamine in its effects. "You snort it up your beezer and it makes you go mad. So Sandy, Russell and I took as much of that as we could get our hands on." Paul Rudolph on the other hand, turned up for the gig wearing a tracksuit, on his racing bike with a thermos flask of tea.

A week after the Pink Fairies farewell show, Larry returned to the Roundhouse to perform with Motorhead in their first ever gig. Motorhead followed this with a nationwide tour of the UK and a trip to Rockfield

Studios in Monmouth, Wales, to record material for an album. Larry divided his time during the autumn and winter of 1975 between Motorhead and the Pink Fairies, which he had reformed on account of the successful reunion shows. He would often finish a gig with the Pink Fairies and, fuelled by amphetamine sulphate, scoot off in the middle of the night for the Motorhead sessions at Rockfield. Larry told Ace Trump: "I think the longest I ever stayed awake in my life was eleven days at Rockfield, and when you think about it now. . . . God! If you could have seen the world through my eyes! — we stayed awake for so long, we didn't eat. I went immediately from twelve stone to nine and a half — I looked fantastic, my mother nearly had a nervous breakdown when she got to see me."

Lucas Fox had been replaced on drums by a friend of Lemmy's called Phil Taylor, whose recruitment entailed re-recording all of the drum tracks to replace Fox's earlier efforts. According to Larry, Lemmy often failed to show up, or arrive hours late, and the session would be a waste of time. Larry told Ace Trump: "Me and Phil had arranged to meet Lemmy at Rockfield, well he may turn up four days later, but we were only there for five!" When the finished product was finally submitted to United Artists, the label shelved it.

At Larry's own request, a new guitarist called Eddie Clarke was added to the Motorhead line up to flesh out the guitar sound. But disillusionment and UA's apparent lack of commitment to the band forced Larry to reconsider his position in the band. Larry also intimates that the Motorhead lifestyle was beginning to take its toll on him — given his Pink Fairies pedigree, this is surely an indicator of how excessive things were at the time! Eddie Clarke was more than capable of taking over the guitarist's mantle, and Larry decided to call it a day with Motorhead to concentrate his efforts on the more viable option at the time: the Pink Fairies.

This page: (l-r) Jenny Ashworth, Jamie Mandelbau and Paul Rudolph relaxing in Nik Turner's parents' garden, Westgate-on-Sea, Kent, circa 1975 (Photograph courtesy of Jenny Ashworth) Inset: Pink Fairies, Stray and Radar Favourites – advert for the second of the Roundhouse Pink Fairies reunions in 1975.
That page: Photograph of Russell from a Polydor news sheet, June 1973

part two

Between The Lines

The Pink Fairies played a number of dates over Christmas, but by March 1976 had ground to a halt again and announced they were breaking up. They gave two farewell concerts at the Marquee Club on March 8 and 9,

insisting that the decision to split was irrevocable this time. The Count Bishops and the Stranglers supported them.

Larry confided to Nigel Cross in 1985: “I could never get Russell Hunter to rehearse the way I wanted him to. And Duncan Sanderson is a certain kind of bass player. . . . But I could never get the discipline with Russell and Sandy. If I’d had my way I would’ve cloned ’em and gotten some geezers who wanted to play slick, stinkin’ MC5 type rock’n’roll. They were content to get up there and jam for ten minutes. It got fucking boring.”

With summer came the first ripples of a new musical movement and, sensing the impending tsunami that became known as punk, Mick Farren wrote a now seminal article for the *NME* called “The Titanic Sails at Dawn.” Farren warned that a return to a grassroots music scene was necessary in order to challenge the status quo of the rock dinosaurs. “Putting the Beatles back together isn’t going to be the salvation of rock and roll,” wrote Farren. “Four kids playing to their contemporaries in a dirty cellar club might. And that, gentle reader, is where you come in.”

Emerging from this prevailing change in musical attitudes was a small independent record label called Stiff. Dave Robinson and Jake Riviera were the men behind Stiff, and in the early days their roster of artists and inhouse technicians reflected the briefly flourishing pub rock scene on which they had cut their teeth. In the mid seventies the pub rock movement arguably bridged the gap between punk and the conventional super rock bands, such as Led Zeppelin and Rod Stewart and the Faces. Many pub rock bands were extremely dull and plodding, but there were some of calibre, such as Dr Feelgood and Eddie and the Hot Rods, who leaned more towards a fast, stripped down, no nonsense brand of rock’n’roll. Nevertheless, many pub rock bands fell victim to the chainsaw wielded by punk.

One musician to serve an apprenticeship back in the sixties, progressing through the 1970s via a number of bands by the time punk emerged, was guitarist Martin Stone. Stone was a contemporary of both the Deviants and Pink Fairies from his time with the Action and Mighty Baby, and more recently pub rockers Chilli Willi and the Red Hot Peppers. At a loose end following his departure from Chilli Willi, Larry recalls how, during one of the Pink Fairies’ many lapses into inactivity, Stone was recruited to give the Fairies “a kick up the ass.”

So it came about that a revitalised Pink Fairies entered the punk era, wielding two guitarists for the first time since Trevor Burton's association with the band. As soon as Stiff Records supremo Jake Riviera heard that Martin Stone was joining the band, he contacted Larry Wallis and demanded a Pink Fairies single. Larry wrote Between The Lines the following day, and the band went into the studio to record it.

Come the end of July, the *NME* was announcing the return of the Pink Fairies with Martin Stone. In addition to a few summer dates, plans for an extensive nationwide tour that autumn were also revealed. But before that they would have a close encounter with the "new wave."

On the morning of August 19, 1976, a coach load of musicians set off from London for Mont de Marsan in the south of France to attend what is now regarded as the first ever punk festival. Not all the artists, on a bill largely comprising continental bands, could be defined as punk in the generally accepted sense. With the Sex Pistols being turned down because of their violent reputation, and the Clash withdrawing out of solidarity with the Pistols, it was left to the Damned, playing only their fifth gig, to represent the British punk movement. The rest of the bands leaving London were more representative of the pub rock scene, with the possible exception of the Pink Fairies and the Gorillas. All cooped up together on a coach, it was inevitable that the long journey to the south of France and back would not pass without incident.

Caroline Coon's account of the trip, published in *Melody Maker,* highlights the emerging gulf between the new wave and the pub rockers: "With few exceptions, the musicians clambering into the coach view the idea that they are punks or play punk rock with varying degrees of amusement and loathing. The very word 'punk' is likely to set the pub rock stalwarts frothing at the mouth like rabid dogs." Despite being a veteran of the British underground scene, it was with grim relish that Coon deliberated over what she perceived as a chasm:

> *Right from the start of the two day journey, the musicians divide into two camps. Occupying the front of the coach are the Pink Fairies . . . They are all thirtyish —* a *laid back mass of tangled, flowing locks,* a *knitted hat and faded blue denim. The Fairies, one*

of the underground's first psychedelic rock groups epitomising the 'peace and love' ideology of the hippy era, will never lose their Flower Child aroma. They represent the antithesis of the punk ethic, the other extreme of the musical pole to the band [the Damned] which takes up positions at the back of the coach.

The Pink Fairies didn't play the festival in the end, as Russell Hunter didn't even make it to Victoria coach station. Open to thinly veiled speculation, Caroline Coon attributed his absence to a "septic arm," which Russell now confirms to have been the case. "We were supposed to go to this festival, although Larry and I were barely speaking to each other," he says. "I was let off the hook by a serious needle infection in the crook of my elbow, which fortunately was halted before gangrene set in — it's a hazard of the junkie profession."

Sandy, Larry, and new member Martin Stone went along for the ride, the tickets having already been booked. Sandy spent most of the journey to Mont de Marsan drinking vast quantities of Cotes du Rhone wine, and, whilst there, most of his time out of it. Larry's talents however did not go to waste, and he filled in on lead guitar for Nick Lowe's pickup band for the occasion, the Girls.

The journey back from Mont de Marsan is significant in that the Damned bassist, Ray Burns, received the moniker for which he is more famous: Captain Sensible. Rat Scabies has said: "During the course of the weekend I'd thrown an egg at Ray. It had all dried in and looked quite good. It had been there a day or so. When we were going through customs on the way back to London Larry Wallis came over and growled, 'Listen, fucking Captain Sensible, you get that fucking egg out of your hair before we get to customs.'"

Captain Sensible remembers it slightly differently. In John Robb's *Punk Rock: An Oral History,* Sensible recounts: "I think Sean [Tyla, Ducks De Luxe frontman] expected we would get collared by customs on the way back because of my hair . . . and he shouted, 'Oi, Captain Sensible! Get that egg out of your hair before customs or I'll stick yer head down the bog and wash it for you.' So it was Sean Tyla, not Larry Wallis who gave me my

name. I like Larry, he was one of the good guys. Sean was a bearded plonker. He was pissed off because pub rock was going down the tubes!"

Sandy plays down any friction between the young punks and the old guard: "I think generally speaking we were all happy to be on the bus."

Soon after the Mont de Marsan festival, Stiff released Between The Lines by the Pink Fairies. It was backed by another new composition, Spoiling For A Fight, which bore similarities to the material Larry had written for Motorhead. Both songs were a significant departure from the last Pink Fairies studio record in 1973. Not punk rock by the standards of the time, they were certainly influenced by the more energetic R&B end of the pub rock spectrum. Following the release of the single the Pink Fairies embarked on their most extensive UK tour to date, taking in several Scottish cities, and, for the first time, Ireland.

Although still committed to his job at Dingwalls, Boss took time out to go on tour with the band as road manager. In addition to the obligatory transit van to haul the gear around, Larry, Russell, Sandy and Martin Stone travelled in the relative luxury of a Range Rover belonging to the owner of Dingwalls, Tony Macintosh, heir to the confectionery manufacturers and future owner of the Groucho Club.

The tour started out well, and the band traversed the length and breadth of the country. By the third week of October the tour had reached Scotland and the band found themselves driving down the east side of Loch Ness, near to Boleskine House, the home of Led Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy Page. (The house had once belonged to occultist Aleister Crowley.)

Martin Stone claimed to know Jimmy Page reasonably well, and persuaded the others to make an impromptu stop. Stone went off exploring to see if anyone was at home and ten minutes later came racing back down the driveway towards the Range Rover, two Doberman Pinschers in hot pursuit. Luckily for Stone, Boss had bought a dog whistle on tour with him, for hi-jinx and to alleviate the boredom: when the slavering hounds were just about upon their quarry, Boss let rip with his whistle and the dogs, momentarily stunned by the sonic emission, stopped dead in their tracks. By the time the dogs had recovered their senses, Stone had made it to the safety of the Range Rover, and the door was slammed shut in the faces of the

berserk animals. The Pink Fairies never did get to have afternoon tea with Jimmy Page.

Aside from moments of light relief, such as the Boleskine House incident, cracks had begun to appear again, and even travelling in the relative comfort of the Range Rover and staying in modest hotels could do little to assuage the tempers that were beginning to fray. One particularly trivial incident that occurred in Glasgow resulted in Boss leaving the tour. Larry had forgotten his bullet belt in Inverness and was going on about it. Says Boss: "Larry had been on at me all day about his bullet belt . . . and it's all 'my fault', and this is like one of my fucking best friends, you know? He's like, 'You're my tour manager!' 'Oh, I'm not your best friend now, I'm just your fucking tour manager now, am I?'"

It was the final straw for Boss. "So the guy who was driving us around, some Scots guy, I can't remember his name, I just did the accounts up to date, gave it all to him, and booked myself on the train at 6am in the morning."

Boss remembers the feeling of relief when he got off the tour, and recalls how a sober and recalcitrant Larry Wallis sent him a postcard a few days later. On the front it had a picture of Bugs Bunny, whilst the message simply read, "What's Up Doc?" "What was up, Doc," says Boss, "was one of my best mates was being a fucking drunken arsehole, so I showed him I could be an arsehole too!" Needless to say, Boss didn't return, and missed out on the Irish leg of the tour. Larry Wallis later told the *Independent* newspaper that the only part of the Irish tour he could remember "was getting off the ferry in Holyhead."

Although the Fairies were only scheduled to play three gigs in Ireland, they involved crossing the border from Coleraine University in the north, to Dublin University in the south, and then back across the border to Belfast Queen's University. A "short cut" suggested by students to whom they were giving a lift resulted in the Fairies driving down the lanes in deepest Armagh that made up part of the "Murder Triangle," notorious during "The Troubles" as an area where various terrorist organisations carried out many political and sectarian killings. "If anyone tries to stop the van, don't stop — even if they've got a British army uniform on, don't stop," the students advised. It was little over a year since an Irish cabaret group called the

Miami Showband had been slaughtered at a supposed army roadblock near the border.

The band made it through the Murder Triangle, but were pulled over by the army when they were on their way back to Belfast. The border patrol took particular interest in the band's "boxes full of wires." By the time they had been thoroughly searched and allowed to continue on their way, they were too late for the show but made amends by playing in the refectory of Belfast Queen's University the following lunch time. Snatching defeat from the jaws of victory in typical Pink Fairies style, all the money they made on the tour would be stolen from them whilst they were in Ireland. Sandy says: "Every penny we'd made on the tour we lost.'cos we had it in a briefcase, and, guess what? The roadie left it in the back of a van."

After however many weeks on the road, having done England, then Scotland, and across from Stranraer to Ireland, the band returned home with literally the few pence they had in their pockets, their guitars and their clothes. Says Sandy: "I think that gave us all a pretty bad taste in our mouths."

Main image: Poster for Pink Fairies and Omnia Opera at the Diamond Suite in Digbeth, Birmingham, September 1987
Inset: Photographs of Larry and Sandy from a Polydor news sheet, June 1973

part three

All the Young Punks

Soon after the Pink Fairies' return to England in November 1976, the Sex Pistols made headlines with an appearance on *The Bill Grundy Show,* and, alongside bands like the Clash and the Damned, would become household names as punk became a nationwide phenomenon. Many bands from the sixties and seventies became terminally unhip overnight. The Pink Fairies managed to maintain a degree of credibility, and even found themselves on the same bill as a number of new wave and punk bands. However, many young punks had never heard of the Pink Fairies, let alone the band's legacy, and unquestioningly lumped them in with the despised rock dinosaurs (and at this time would have been well justified in doing so). In 1984, Derek Oliver was moved to say of the punk era Pink Fairies in a *Kerrang! Extra* retrospective: "[T]he early souped-up garage band charge of white noise had deteriorated into a seething stench of bloated over-loud Heavy Metal (honestly it was redundant)." Boss Goodman comments: "It really needed Larry to come down on the volume, because it was just a fucking wall of noise some nights. . . . It was just stupidly loud, and there's no way . . . you just can't get the dynamics of it together on stage when you're that loud. It's just a wall of fucking noise — but he probably wouldn't hear of that!"

Adhering to punk's "year zero" mentality, they wouldn't admit they held much truck for a bunch of long haired 1960s hippy renegades at the time, but it is apparent now that the Fairies' influence on the punk generation was quite significant. Tony James of the London SS, and later of Generation X, confirms this in John Robb's *Punk Rock: An Oral History:*

> *In the early seventies I moved into the* Friends/IT/Oz *magazine world. I've never told anyone about this period of my life, buying those magazines, going to see the Edgar Broughton Band, Pink Fairies and Hawkwind — the anti establishment underground. I related to the Pink Fairies and Edgar Broughton. I was into agit prop. People like Mick Farren were around. I was reading him and*

getting into his band the Deviants. I was digging that whole kind of thing.

Similarly, Brian James, later of the Damned, was in a "rough rock'n'roll band" called Bastard that was influenced by the Stooges, MC5 and Pink Fairies. He told John Robb: "The hippy thing came along all of a sudden. I was not into that! The only band I was into was the Pink Fairies, who were sort of more rock'n'roll. They wore leather jackets and didn't give a fuck." Captain Sensible is also quoted by Robb as saying: "I really liked the Fairies — they were the only raunchy British act; maybe the Sweet as well, they always had great B-sides. . . . They were rough and ready, punk as anything at the time." As to why he liked the Fairies, Sensible explained: "The bands that really impressed me were the ones that had a bit of spirit on stage, a bit of naughtiness to them. . . . When I saw that they were real people with crises and onstage nervous breakdowns, I thought that was brilliant. Every time I saw a band obviously displaying signs of personality defects I used to follow them."

Russell Hunter is quite philosophical about the impact that the Pink Fairies had on punk, and the impact punk had on him:

There does seem to be a certain overlap from Fairies to Punk that is not attributed to other bands of our era. This most probably comes from the constant references to our ability or perceived lack of it . . . I always thought this a silly and invalid mountain from a molehill and particularly unfair to Paul and Larry, both of whom could more than hold their own in most musical company. It's only rock'n'roll not fucking brain surgery set to music. The 'artification' of it made some critics' reputations — and continues to do so — and created a *whole bogus artistic subculture of reverence and respect. Punk actively and deliberately tried to sabotage that, and although the form and substance was often so gross as to invoke McLuhan's old 'Medium is the Message' to the limit, I admired it for just that, without ever wanting to sit and listen to much of it. When one is pushed to extremes to make* a *point, the making of it may not hold up logically, but emotionally is where it hits home.*

In January 1977, a revamped *IT* reported on a seemingly revitalised Pink Fairies: “Fairies clean up sound by accident too. Larry Wallis broke his Fender guitar and is now playing Gibson on stage providing a sonic atmosphere for Martin Stone to chop away at. I’m Waiting For My Man — best ever. Walk Don’t Run even better.” The report ended with the statement: “Russell like a man possessed.”

Punk continued to pick up pace, and by February Russell had decided to call it a day once again. Larry and Sandy recruited Edgar Broughton Band drummer Steve Broughton, and in March the new line up of the Pink Fairies was announced to play a Legalise Cannabis Campaign/Release all-night benefit at Sussex University in Brighton. Also on the bill were the “new wave psychedelic band” Here & Now, Tim Blake, Amazorblades, and a number of lesser lights, whilst visual stimulation was provided by the Acidica Lightshow.

The Fairies nearly didn’t make it. Steve Broughton had changed his mind, but help was at hand in the form of Lightning Raiders’ guitarist Little Jon and drummer Jorge Panchito.

> *NME* reporter Jonathan Barnett had been less than impressed with some of the earlier acts, but was moved to say of the Pink Fairies: “The Fairies were the Fairies. Real Punk, in other words, if that label yet has any credibility.” He continued to enthuse: “Urban camp and couldn’t care less they bitched with each other throughout the set. . . . What a bunch of sweeties, but they were great and got the androgynous young things up front and jiving at three in the morning.”

The set comprised of many cover versions (I’m Waiting For My Man, Good Morning Little School, Little Queenie, Let’s Spend The Night Together and Day Tripper), reflecting the fact that the two Lightning Raiders hadn’t really had time to learn the regular Pink Fairies set. According to *IT,* the two stand ins, “added a spark of lightning to the Pink Fairies, inspiring them to turn in one of those rare superb performances for which they are justly legendary.”

Favourable reviews aside, the Pink Fairies were heading for another period of inertia, and despite speculation in *Melody Maker* that they would be joining Hawkwind to celebrate the summer solstice at the Stonehenge Festival, by June the Fairies had reached the end of the road yet again. "Sometimes we'd just have a row and then we'd drift off and not see each other," Larry told Nigel Cross. He also implied that Russell was just as likely to throw his drum kit in the hall, having decided on a whim that he no longer wanted to play.

Russell returned to "pursue a career as a barman at Dingwalls," *IT* reported in April 1977, a position he had held on and off since the band had split early in 1974. Sandy was immediately linked to the Lightning Raiders, a band he would be associated with until the early eighties. Paul Rudolph, meanwhile, had fallen victim to one of Dave Brock's periodical Stalinist purges within Hawkwind. It is often assumed that Rudolph, and Hawkwind drummer Alan Powell, were ousted for trying to turn the band into some kind of shuffling funk outfit. In reality, Brock was feeling threatened by Rudolph, such was his prowess on both bass and guitar. Nik Turner recalls: "Dave Brock suddenly found himself a bit obsessed really. Paul was a much better guitarist than he was . . . and I think that there was a bit of insecurity on Dave's part, even though Paul was playing bass."

Brock apparently also believed that behind his back Rudolph, Powell and Turner were attempting a coup to get rid of him. All three left or were sacked from Hawkwind within a few weeks of one another.

Rudolph and Powell wasted no time in getting a new band together, called Kicks. Rudolph (switching back to guitar) and drummer Powell were joined by Cal Bachelor on vocals and rhythm guitar, and Steve York on bass. Kicks made their debut at the Rock Garden on March 4, 1977. This was hastily followed by a string of dates in the capital, including a gig at the Roundhouse on April 30, and a couple more in the north of England. Dick Tracy, reporting for *NME* in early June, said of the band:

> *It's* a *refreshing combination. Repertoire at present includes old Kim Fowley tunes mixed with Al Green and* a *long Canned Heat style boogie number. The audience was small but they managed to stimulate the wrigglers and the hecklers successfully. Once they've*

merged their individual influences into a stronger whole, they could be strong contenders for the wasteland between the music of the old hippies and the music of the punks.

Kicks folded in July 1977. Mick Farren was making his own tentative return to performing music. While on a trip to the States with Boss Goodman to check out the New York punk scene, Mick was asked by the former manager of seminal new wave band Television, Terry Ork, if he would like to contribute to an album of Phil Spector cover versions called *Bionic Gold.* In self imposed exile from playing rock'n'roll since 1970, Farren warmed to the idea and entered the studio to record the requisite Spector number, To Know Him Is To Love Him. His backing band included Marky Ramone. Out of the session also came a cover of the Rolling Stones' Play With Fire, plus Lost Johnny, a song that Mick cowrote with Lemmy, originally for Hawkwind.

Encouraged by his time in New York, Mick joined Motorhead on stage at the Marquee. He also joined them for a benefit to raise funds for the restoration of Willam Wordsworth's cottage in the Lake District, for which the band assumed the name Iron Fist and the Hordes from Hell.

Following the recent Pink Fairies split, Larry Wallis was retained by Stiff Records and became the label's number two producer after Nick Lowe. Some of Larry's more notable production credits include the Adverts and Wreckless Eric. A casual drink Larry had with Jake Riviera resulted in Mick Farren being asked to record an EP for Stiff. Imbued by the whisky and cocaine fuelled session in upstate New York earlier that year, Mick jumped at the offer and set about recruiting a band.

It was something of a turnabout for Mick Farren, given his stance of the previous seven years. His reply to one reader who had written to the *NME* demanding he reform the Deviants had been glib. "Forget it!" wrote Mick. "We don't even talk to each other anymore, and anyway, we can't get the Methedrine."

Barely a year later he was entering Pathway Studios with a reconvened band called the Deviants. Larry Wallis took on the role of producer and guitarist, whilst ex-Hawkwind rhythmites Paul Rudolph and Alan Powell,

fresh from their shortlived Kicks project, played guitar and drums. On bass was a relative newcomer to the Cosmic Family called Andy Colquhoun.

Andy Colquhoun was born on August 18, 1950, in Brighton, Sussex. He was educated at Monckton Wyld in Dorset, and Worthing High (the same school as Mick Farren, although a few years separated them), finishing his education at Enfield College of Technology in London. The influence of Hank Marvin on various Deviants and Pink Fairies members cannot be underestimated, and Cliff Richard and the Shadows were amongst Andy's early favourites. Then came the Merseybeat boom, and an interest in the Beatles, Rolling Stones, the Who and Jeff Beck.

Andy started playing the guitar at the age of twelve, his first electric being a Watkins Rapier. It was soon replaced by a Hofner Verithin, and shortly after by a Gibson SG. The first band he joined, the Dead and Buried, began and ended their set with a cover of Making Time by the Creation. They changed their name to the Growth and Andy left, tired of playing the usual "local hops" and youth club gigs. He began visiting Brighton and Worthing to watch name bands. After seeing Peter Green with John Mayall, and influenced by Jimi Hendrix, who was on the television a lot, Andy packed his bags and moved to London. He gravitated towards Ladbroke Grove and began dropping acid and immersing himself in the scene.

Living in Lancaster Road in Ladbroke Grove, Andy met many of the musicians with whom he would later work (Paul Rudolph lived upstairs from him). His connections with the Pink Fairies date back to the early 1970s, when he took a job as "Business Manager" for *Friends* (later *Frendz).* The Fairies connection continued some years later when Andy briefly became involved with a band called Glider, whose members included Roger d'Elia, Chas McKay and Twink.

Glider recorded a demo at Island's Basing Street Studios, with Muff Winwood producing. Twink recalls that Glider were stylistically not dissimilar to the band Stoneground, and Island were quite interested in the band's laid back approach. They played Acklam Hall and a couple of parties but in the end nothing came of Glider.

Responding to an ad in *Melody Maker,* Andy joined a retro R&B band called the Rockets, who wound up playing a residency in April 1976 at the

PN Club in Munich.

Andy's first appearance with the Pink Fairies took place when the Rockets played a set at a Pink Fairies party in an old church where Larry was living. As the Fairies set was winding down, Andy joined them for a jam. He says: "I got up and jammed with the Pinkos on their last number, I'm Waiting For My Man, and was struck with the depth of the drums and bass. I knew this sounded like a giant step forward." However, it would be another ten years before he joined the Pink Fairies.

Andy had a narrow escape from hit records and a life of fame and fortune when the Rockets drummer left to join a Beatles influenced power pop band called the Pleasers, and in his place stepped an American called Stewart Copeland. In an interview with Ande Tucker for *UHCK* fanzine, Andy recalls playing "a few shows with Stewart Copeland, which were really good actually, and there was talk of me and Stewart working together and doing this band called the Police, but I really didn't like the bass player he had."

Without a drummer the Rockets folded, and after a brief dalliance with a punk band called the Zips at the turn of the year, Andy and Rockets singer Jimmy Coul formed a punk band called Warsaw Pakt, with Lucas Fox on drums, Chris Underhill on bass, and John Manly on rhythm guitar. Warsaw Pakt became famous for recording, producing, packaging and distributing an LP called *Needle Time* all in the space of twenty four hours. Despite it selling 5,000 copies in its first week of release, Island Records cancelled production of the album and made it a limited pressing following a dispute with the band. Without an agent, and no longer having the backing of the record company, Warsaw Pakt split up.

Needle Time is particularly relevant here because it marked the beginning of a songwriting partnership between Mick Farren and Andy Colquhoun that continues to this day. As well as cowriting the Warsaw Pakt single Safe And Warm, the pair collaborated on some album tracks (of these, Fast Eddie was re-recorded for Mick's solo album *Vampires Stole My Lunch Money* in the summer of 1978).

Andy's first major collaboration with the Cosmic Family was the *Screwed Up* EP for Stiff. The recording session took place at Pathway and

yielded four songs, all of which were included on the record. In addition to the eponymous title track, Screwed Up, were Outrageous Contagious, Shock Horror, and Let's Loot The Supermarket Again (Like We Did Last Summer). The latter was a souped up reworking of a track from the Deviants' *Disposable* album of 1968, and was as apt to the times as the hashish addled, Methedrine comedown of the original had been almost ten years earlier. The Deviants had been so out of it on the original version they could hardly play. Apart from a "toot" to get things rolling, "the twin downfalls" of whiskey and cocaine were banished from the studio for the reworked version. The lyric was revamped and updated: *"Times don't change, but the haircuts do / Same old bullshit for me or you / Romp and stomp and hope to flash / Hard time summer when the sevens clash*."

Charles Shaar Murray, reviewing the record in *NME,* wrote: "An EP no less, headed up by the excellent title song in which Micky displays a dangerous tendency to sing in tune. Keep this up, Micky and your career as a vocalist is through, mate. Admirable stun-blast guitar throughout from Larry Wallis: old would be hoodlums in leather jackets stick together."

A month before *Screwed Up* was released, at the end of November 1977, Stiff released a Larry Wallis solo single called Police Car, backed by On Parole, a song he had originally written and recorded for the prototype Motorhead. According to Larry, Police Car was inspired after he took a Mandrax tablet and watched the American TV cop show *Police Woman,* starring Angie Dickinson. In his Mandrax fug, the police sirens seemed to be hypnotically screaming at him, "I'm a police car, police car, police car." He snapped out of his stupor long enough to jot the idea down and promptly passed out. Thus a classic was born, and Police Car became a staple of the Live Stiffs tour that autumn, and would also become a favourite on the Pink Fairies reunion tour in 1987.

Twink embraced punk wholeheartedly, when not dicing with death. The ill fated band Fallen Angels, whose ranks included Mickey Finn, Guy Humphries from the Winkies, and Greg Ridley, broke up when Twink was hospitalised following a serious car crash on the way to their first gig. Talking to Jamie Mandelkau, now working for *NME,* in February 1978, Twink exclaimed: "I've almost been killed three times in the last year! I had a bad car accident. Then in hospital, two days after my operation, I was

attacked. Some guy tried to stab me. He was in an oxygen tent and the nurses hadn't topped him up enough. He went berserk. Then a month ago I was on a 31 bus when the wall and scaffolding of a house came down on the roof."

Twink joined a punk band called the Rings, vacating the drum stool in favour of lead vocals. He had known the members of the band from his days in Cambridge when he played with them under the name of ZZZ, as well as other guises. The Rings released one single, I Wanna Be Free, on Chiswick in May 1977. When the Rings supported the Damned, Twink spent the whole of the gig behind the drummer to avoid the shower of spit hailing from the audience and the burning cigarette ends that were being flicked at him, fearing they might set his hair on fire.

The Rings were booked to play the second Mont de Marsan festival in the summer of 1977. But by this time Twink and the other Rings had fallen out, and consequently Twink assembled a new band to play the festival as the Rings, while his ex-bandmates changed their name from the Rings to the Maniacs and played alongside them.

It looked like Paul Rudolph, Russell Hunter and Sandy were all going to appear with Twink, thus effectively reprising the original Pink Fairies line up, but with less than a fortnight to rehearse, Russell dropped out, unable to get to grips with some of the Rings material. Twink says that Rudolph pulled out when he decided it would not benefit his career. "It really was a lame excuse," recalls Twink, "because it would have been great. We would have wiped the floor with everybody."

Sandy played bass as planned, and a guitarist called Chris Chesney took Rudolph's place on guitar. Twink handled the drums and vocals. Inevitably, alcohol and drugs, particularly speed, became a significant part of the weekend's proceedings. Chris Chesney recalls on his website:

> *Twink, Sandy and Bob Heath, our tour manager, were like kids in* a *candy store. Their intake was prodigious. Epic. Heroic. My drug of choice at the time was cannabis — mainly hash — which was in short supply, belonging as it did to hippy culture. We played our set right after the Clash. Now that's* a *tough spot. Life holds very few fears after a baptism of that nature. Thankfully, the crowd were so*

battle fatigued by drugs, booze and hours of incessant thrash, that they didn't have the energy to object to our bizarre set of free form jamming — which lack of rehearsal had forced us to do — once we had discharged the one song we had actually rehearsed.

Chris Chesney and Sandy worked with Twink again when they were invited to perform on songs that were "part of a larger project called Germania," Twink told the *NME* in February 1978, "a concept set in underground Berlin during the Sex Olympics of 1988." Assuming the name of Twink and the Fairies, they also re-recorded a suitably punked up version of Do It!, which was released as a twelve inch single by Chiswick. "One night the Lightning Raiders just turned up with Sandy," says Twink, "and we just jammed on it, and it was done in just one take."

The B-side consisted of two tracks, and although one of them was a slow tempoed, lounge style number (Enter The Diamonds), the other was an identikit punk song. Written about his old friend and Stars collaborator Syd Barrett, the title Psychedelic Punkaroo was suggested by ex-Who manager, Pete Meaden, as an alternative to Acid Punk (a slogan in a series of badges designed by Twink and produced by his friend and ex-Fairies roadie Joly McFie for Better Badges).

Do It! was re-titled Do It! 77 for the single, in order to reflect its new punk credentials. But the first flushes of punk had already passed by this time and it was already February 1978! It was a creditable version, if a little redundant in light of the spirit and punk energy of the original. Reviewed in a week in which traditional soul and rockabilly singles were top of the pile, Cliff White from *NME* predictably lambasted Do It! 77: "Stuttering, dumb-assed one-liner that goes on . . . and on . . . and on, eventually fading into a wandering guitar solo that loses what little impact it starts out with in a mess of crashing accompaniment. Crapola, thought I. But just in case I was misguided, I checked with the authority. 'Boring rubbish,' she said, and she should know."

Twink moved to Belgium for a few years, where he recorded the occasional session with Belgian musicians, including a band called Bijou (but withdrew from live performance until his return to England in 1983). He was also involved with Elton Motello, a band formed by a British

musician called Alan Timms, who, like Twink, had also decamped to Belgium. Previously, Timms had been in Brian James' band Bastard before James left to join the Damned. Twink and Elton Motello produced enough material for an album. A single was culled from the sessions (Apocalipstic c/w She's Crying), and became the first release on Twink's own record label.

Sandy concentrated his efforts into the Lightning Raiders, who he describes as being at the rock'n'roll end of the punk spectrum. (At one point the band featured saxophonist Michael Wilding, son of actress Elizabeth Taylor, as well as drummers Harry Lupino, nephew of Ida Lupino of the theatrical family dynasty, and George Butler, whose pedigree includes playing with Alex Harvey, Al Stewart, Ian Dury, Vinegar Joe, the Clash and Whirlwind, to name a few.) After members of the Sex Pistols had gone their separate ways in early 1978, guitarist Steve Jones and drummer Paul Cook used to drop by the Lightning Raiders' squat in Maida Vale. They'd hang out, smoke a little dope, and jam with each other. Sandy infers that Cook and Jones were also getting ideas from the Lightning Raiders, and Steve Jones in particular was "copping Little John's licks."

In June, the Lightning Raiders played at the Glastonbury festival, on a bill with Motorhead. Sandy recalls being hit in the testicles by a flying sparkplug. "Luckily it didn't hit me in the head," he says, "otherwise I wouldn't be talking to you now!" Sandy recalls that one of the guitarists was dressed in a full length trenchcoat for protection against the hail of phlegm. Lemmy at one point tried to intervene. "He actually came on stage," says Sandy, "and we were doing our Lightning Raiders thing, and the bikers didn't like us, we were playing too good a rock'n'roll for them!" Lemmy addressed the audience: "Look, these guys are my friends, give 'em some slack." Despite the hostile reception, the exposure was good for the Lightning Raiders and they maintained their growing stature by playing at both the Glastonbury and Stonehenge festivals the following year.

Andy Colquhoun joined Tanz Der Youth in April 1978, which was the new band formed by ex-Damned guitarist Brian James. Despite James' reputation, Tanz Der Youth only achieved a modicum of success, and a legacy of just one single, a John Peel session, and a support slot on a Black Sabbath tour. "We replaced Van Halen who had other commitments," says

Andy, “and were systematically booed for playing some sort of punk psychedelic rock.” On the punk circuit they were greeted with the usual hail of gob. Talking to Ande Tucker for *UHCK* in 1994, Andy reflected: “At the time I was told [spitting] was a sign of appreciation, although it’s hard to appreciate the sight of Alan’s chromium drum kit green! . . . I must admit it made me reconsider going out and performing.”

The *Screwed Up* EP generated enough interest for Logo Records to contact Mick about the re-release of the Deviants’ third album. Logo had recently acquired the Transatlantic catalogue and also agreed to let Mick record a new album. In his autobiography, Mick says: “The interval between completing the work for Stiff and commencing the Logo album . . . was so short that it almost seemed to be two phases of the same project, with only a protracted coffee break inbetween.”

Mick and Larry began work on what was tentatively titled *Without Annette,* but eventually became *Vampires Stole My Lunch Money.* By the spring of 1978, Andy Colquhoun and Alan Powell were working on the album and playing with Tanz Der Youth. Andy told Ande Tucker: “I was not sleeping and I’d grab an hour’s kip behind my stack and I’d be in the studio all night with Mick and Larry.”

Ostensibly *Vampires* was a Mick Farren solo project, because Paul Rudolph, the only other Deviant who had been around for the recording of *Screwed Up,* had since headed back to Canada, stopping off in southern Spain for a year to cycle around the mountains. The core nucleus of musicians working on the album comprised Mick, Larry and Andy, aided and abetted on backing vocals by Sonja Kristina from Curved Air, and a prePretenders Chrissie Hynde, ex-Dr Feelgood Wilko Johnson on guitar, and Will Stallybrass blowing up a storm on the harmonica.

Mick admits in his autobiography that, due to budgetary restraints, time and money had been concentrated into five or six of their favourite tracks to the detriment of the others: “the remainder had been banged down as little more than jamming, art school R&B, with only a thin coat of metalflake.”

The album’s opener was a fairly straight reworking of Zappa’s Trouble Coming Every Day, while Son of A Millionaire was about Nigel Samuel, the wealthy young heir who funded the Deviants’ first LP The only real

oddity was called (I Know From) Self Destruction. Accompanied by a steady heartbeat, replicated by some electronic sound equipment rented from a Pink Floyd engineer, Mick's lyric is poignant and self loathing.

The album is an alcohol sodden beast that sweats booze from nearly every groove, and songs like I Wanna Drink, Half Price Drinks and Drunk In The Morning are self explanatory. The latter two displayed a hitherto unknown sensitivity by Farren and Wallis. Half Price Drinks was the single cribbed from the album and, despite its allusions to "Happy Hour," was not a celebration of drinking. In an interview with John Tobler for *ZigZag* (September 1978), Mick spelled it out:

> *It is serious. I wrote that with Larry about* a year, year *and* a *half ago. We both went through pretty serious alcoholism. Both were pretty damn miserable, and that's why I'm pleased to be out of rock'n'roll journalism in* a way, *and why Larry's quite happy because he's not expected to be in A Band, with capital letters, because it was upsetting us. Plus other personal factors — things were getting kind of twisted, and we were drinking too much. It's* a *song about sitting in the corner of the bar, watching other people get as twisted as you are, because you're flat, down there, and the early evening crowd is hustling through. It was rough going through that stage, but that's the only thing to write songs about, what's happening to you, and relating them to other people.*

Critical and public acclaim was mixed. Concentrating more on Mick's boozy reputation rather than the record itself, Dean Porsche for *ZigZag* said in his review of the single: "You'd never guess this washed up old lush was pushing forty. He sounds about ninety."

Melody Maker was less blunt, and described Half Price Drinks as "a dense, nicotine stained rasp through a barfly's view of the happy hour," concluding that "commercial chances are less than zero."

As for the album, Chris Brazier for *Melody Maker* was slightly more equivocal: "The music is pretty much as you'd expect — shambling good time stuff with about a fifty per cent success rate that sounds best when you don't listen too hard." Larry's guitar work made those tracks that Brazier

warmed to: “Wallis excels particularly on . . . Half Price Drinks, his hauntingly reflective riff cutting into an acoustic backdrop and rendering the sadness of Farren’s observations from a helpless and wasted dark corner utterly convincing. . . . I’ve only ever seen him [Farren] twice at gigs, and both times he was in an advanced state of inebriation which is how judging from this album he usually chooses to confront the world.”

Monty Smith, reviewing the album for *NME,* wrote: “There’s an air of authenticity, too, about Drunk In The Morning, Larry Wallis’ guitars adding a nostalgically cutting edge to this listless drama reflecting the low life style of nihilistic drunks.” Smith wasn’t so sure about (I Know From) Self Destruction: “Protestations from a ’juice-head’ [the term Farren uses to describe himself in I Know. . .] are all very well, so long as they’re not as boring as Waterloo arches drunks.” Smith concluded that “maybe Mick wants to end up in a doss house — he sure sounds like he’d feel at home there.”

> *Vampires Stole My Lunch Money* was reportedly shifting around 1,000 units a week at the end of September. No mean feat considering that the hastily assembled band only played a handful of gigs to promote it. Adopting the name Mick Farren and the Good Guys, the live band consisted of the core recording personnel (Mick on vocals, Larry and Andy on guitars, and Alan Powell on drums), with the addition of ex-Vibrator, future Adam and the Ants, and Roxy Music cohort, Gary Tibbs, on bass. Mick recalls that the gigs ranged from good to downright bad, such as Brighton, where “everything, from our memories to the technology, broke down.”

In his autobiography, it is Dingwalls that Mick remembers with most affection: “[W]e were finally on home turf, and not fucking up was a matter of regimental honour.”

As manager of Dingwalls, Boss Goodman pulled out all the stops to make the evening special for Mick and the Good Guys, laying on buckets of iced beer and a bottle of Jack Daniels; he also took to the decks to DJ for the evening. Hawkwind lightshow engineer Jonathan Smeaton arrived unexpectedly to provide additional lighting for the evening. “I poured all

the whiskey-sweat and energy I could summon into the crowd, and they returned it multifold," says Mick in his autobiography, adding, "they may not have been lending their ears to bel canto, but the punters had been well and truly entertained."

Pete Silverton, reviewing the gig for *Sounds,* was impressed: "If the Good Guys weren't so schooled at their chosen genre of slop and drunken rock, they could have been the garage band to end all garage bands. . . . And when you notice one of the crew is Larry Wallis (on big, black *loud* guitar), you realise Fairies never change, they just let their hair get longer." Silverton continued: "They strutted and preened their way through Farren's raucous tributes to life in the gutter like they'd just been thrown out of Henneky's in Portobello Road . . . having put themselves on the line like that they were gonna make sure they were gonna make it work, albeit in their own anarchic fashion. I suppose you could call it survivors' rock. Music to get drunk to. I got drunk."

Mick told *NME* he was confident Logo would maintain their support, given the encouraging sales of the album. But the support didn't extend beyond a further single, Broken Statue c/w It's All In The Picture. The Aside was different from the material on *Vampires* in that energy levels were upped to produce a slab of powerful contemporary new wave. The B-side continued in the tradition of the album with fast R&B of the Dr Feelgood ilk. In his review on Julian Cope's Head Heritage website, Seth Wimpfheimer states that Mick's vocals were pure "Beefheart drunk as a skunk," but none the worse for it.

As with the earlier single, neither the new single or the album managed to trouble the charts.

Main image: 'One stretch of autobahn looks pretty much the same as any other' – Russell Hunter experiences the monotony of the road in Germany, 1988 (Photograph courtesy of Andy Colquhoun) Inset: Andy Colquhoun in need of liquid refreshment, Germany, 1988

part four

Jail Guitar Dingwalls

Mick Farren was instrumental in bringing Wayne Kramer to the UK, ex-MC5 guitarist. The circumstances surrounding Kramer's recent imprisonment went back to the summer of 1975, and happened to coincide with a visit from Mick and Boss. Following the disintegration of the MC5 in a welter of heroin and alcohol, Kramer had fallen onto hard times and was reduced to guitar duelling in his hometown. Needless to say, it was not the most lucrative of ways to make a living, and Kramer was supplementing his income with a little cocaine dealing. Inevitably the little got bigger, and Kramer was eventually busted by the Drug Enforcement Agency as part of a wider FBI operation against the Mob.

The bust occurred while an oblivious Mick and Boss were on board an Amtrak Express heading for the Motor City. They arrived in Detroit to be greeted with the news that Kramer had been busted, but was out on bail. Fearing recriminations from the mobsters whose cocaine Kramer was fronting, and had subsequently lost to the DEA, Mick and Boss spent the entire visit on tenterhooks. Venturing to a Detroit nightclub, their paranoia

was exacerbated when they unwittingly snorted large lines of what they assumed to be speed or cocaine, but was in actuality PCF, better known as Angel Dust.

The mob reprisals never came and Mick and Boss made it home in one piece. Kramer was sentenced to four years in Lexington Penitentiary, Kentucky, in April 1976. Mick and various other colleagues within the music press campaigned to keep his name and the spirit of the MC5 alive. The Clash dedicated a B-side to Kramer (Clash City Rockers c/w Jail Guitar Doors). The *NME* ran Kramer's police mugshot on the cover of their August 1977 edition, with a feature article inside. Stiff and Chiswick collaborated on a Wayne Kramer benefit single, comprising material that Mick had recorded with Wayne back in 1974. The A-side featured an MC5 favourite, Ramblin' Rose, and the B-side was a Farren/Kramer composition entitled Get Some. The proceeds went to Kramer on his release.

In January 1978, having served half his sentence, Kramer was released on parole. He was flown over to the UK by Mick to play a testimonial gig arranged at Dingwalls, along with another at the Hope and Anchor in Islington. In an interview with Ken Shimamoto for *I-94 Bar,* Wayne said it

> *was really* a *brotherly thing for them to do, considering that most people come out of prison with what they have when they go into prison, which is nothing, and that's generally the reason they wind up going back to prison. But when I came out, I had like 2,000 dollars as* a *cushion to help me adjust to life back on the street. It really, really made the difference for me. Not that I would have gone back to dealing drugs or selling stolen TVs or guns or whatever, but it really did. A couple grand, y'know, straightens you out. Takes the pressure off.*

During his stay Kramer recorded a number of new tracks, including a cover of Jimmy Cliff's The Harder They Come, which was released as a single. A CD of the Dingwalls gig was released in 2000. Entitled *Cocaine Blues,* it was credited to Wayne Kramer and the Pink Fairies, although strictly speaking it wasn't the Pink Fairies backing Kramer, but various members of the Cosmic Family. The rhythm section was made up of Andy

Colquhoun on bass and George Butler on drums, with Larry Wallis sharing guitar duties with Wayne Kramer. The CD bears testimony to the quality of the performance, and for the sleeve notes Wayne fondly recalls: “I was ecstatic to be out of prison and with my friends, doing the things that I’m supposed to be doing. I remember the gig was a ball and we tore the place up. It was a good night.”

Harry George, reviewing for *NME* (March 19, 1979), was of the same opinion, and particularly impressed with the chemistry between Kramer and Wallis: “The guitars spark like Johnny Winter and Rick Derringer on a good night. The Harder They Come follows, divine dual lead and more great work from Butler making purist objections redundant.” George was undoubtedly full of respect for Kramer, but reserved his praise for Larry Wallis, whose talents as a guitarist he recognised as unjustly underrated: “Somebody find Larry fruitful regular employment: these one offs are mere prick teasing — we want Wallis!”

In the autumn of 1980, Larry was commissioned by Dave Robinson to record a solo album for Stiff Records, and recruited Deke Leonard from Man, Pete Thomas from Elvis Costello’s backing band the Attractions, and George Webley on bass. Despite laying down all the material, the album was shelved when Larry and Dave Robinson fell out after Larry refused demands to sign a five album, five year contract.

Contrary to popular belief, Russell had not withdrawn from the music scene completely after leaving the Pink Fairies. His most notable post Fairies musical involvement was with the Teresa D’Abrue Band. D’Abrue had been in the all girl group the Sadista Sisters, who made their name at the Edinburgh Festival in 1975. According to Russell: “D’Abrue could have been the Annie Lennox half of Dave Stewart’s new band [the Tourists].” She walked away however, and formed her own band with her husband. “Great things were expected and forecast but it never worked out — there were tensions between her and Nick as there often are in within-band marriages. We spent a lot of time in Holland, the only place we gathered any kind of following.”

Russell’s use of heroin had continued unabated into the eighties, as had Steve Took’s, Russell’s old friend. Steve Took choked to death on a cocktail

stone after celebrating the arrival of a periodical royalty cheque from his Tyrannosaurus Rex days with a mix of morphine and magic mushrooms.

For some, Took's death came as no surprise — it was only surprising that it hadn't happened sooner. Tony Secunda had briefly taken him under his wing in the 1970s and tried to manage him, and there had also been the Steve Took's Horns Project, which never really took off. Larry was present at one of the Horns Project sessions, when Took was due to add vocals to the backing tracks. Recalls Larry:

> *Took immediately said he couldn't sing* a *note unless he was* a *relaxed man, and relaxed meant half a bottle of dark rum. Well, by the time the bottle of rum was halfway through, Took was slurring his words, getting it all wrong and everybody knew it. I said I was just going to have a piss and I went outside, picked up my guitar and crept away. It was embarrassing and that was the one time that I did desert Took. He thought that when you hired a recording studio you invited all your friends and it was party time.*

Took's last live appearance is thought to be an Inner City Unit gig on June 16, 1980, where he joined Bob Calvert on stage for the encore to perform a Beatles cover, Slow Down, and the old Hawkwind favourite, Brainstorm. Drink in hand he proclaimed to the audience that he had been given some LSD, before yelling and screaming his way through the songs.

Took's death wasn't enough to jolt Russell Hunter out of his own heroin stupor, but almost exactly a year later he would be dealt a life changing wake up call when his girlfriend died of an overdose in October 1981. Russell says with great regret: "It was a terrible shove back into reality. I ask myself ever since why it was necessary for someone I loved to be sacrificed just to make me see what a mess my life was. I stopped immediately with the minimum of withdrawal problems. It was a fucked up game I'd unwittingly been playing."

Larry Wallis continued a regular routine of gigs at Dingwalls using a variety of bizarre names. On any given night he could be Death Commandos of Love, the Knob Artists, Donut Dunkers of Death, or simply Police Cars (seasonally adjusted at Christmas time to Police Sleighs).

Sandy and George Butler sometimes found themselves in Larry's backing bands after the Lightning Raiders folded in the early 1980s. Psychedelic Musik was released as a one off single by a splinter group of the Raiders that included ex-Sex Pistols Paul Cook and Steve Jones in place of Sandy and Lupino. The Raiders' guitarist and singer Andy Allen had provided uncredited bass on much of the Pistols' *Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle* and joined Cook and Jones in their own band, the Professionals. Following Allen's departure, Hodge recruited Gass Wild on vocals and Bruce Irvine on second guitar; George Butler also rejoined. The band released another single, Criminal World, to little success. They also signed to Island, and recorded an album's worth of material that was shelved.

Larry told Tony Rettman: "All our shows were small time and low key. It seems that around that time, I'd only do a gig as long as nobody knew about it. It's the old 'Aaw, you don't wanna see me, I'm crap,' kinda thing. I'm a fucking idiot."

In February 1984, Wayne Kramer was in town again, and joined Larry at Dingwalls for what was ostensibly his Death Commandos of Love line up, minus Andy Colquhoun: Larry Wallis on guitar, Sandy on bass, and George Butler on drums. The other significant addition was Mick Farren, whose presence, along with that of Sandy, ensured the band would adopt the name of the Deviants for the occasion. The first of two gigs was a "Press and Friends" warm up, whilst the second night was recorded for posterity and released as *Human Garbage* on Psycho Records later that year.

Reviews were favourable. Bill Black had this to say in *Sounds:* "Wallis rode the set with one eye on his lean licks and another on fellow PF, Sandy on bass. Between them they kept things on a straight, if hardly smooth line." Black complimented Mick's singing, but felt compelled to mention his drinking too: "Farren himself was in fine vocal form dividing his time between umpteen bottles of Special Brew and carousing such classics as I'm Waiting For My Man."

Testimonials to the Deviants's "fathers of punk" credentials were alluded to by Black in his review of the gig, and by Edwin Pouncey in his review of the album. "They were the nearest thing we had then to Detroit's Iggy and the Stooges. Punk at its most Neanderthal," wrote Pouncey. *"Human Garbage* is no masterpiece, but then it never pretends to be. It's

flawed and dirty rock music which, when taken in the spirit it was made in, will amuse and amaze you for hours. It's not essential but no way is it disposable."

The release of *Human Garbage* in November 1984 roughly coincided with a mini album misleadingly titled *Previously Unreleased.* It was a Larry Wallis solo album, but Ted Carroll, the Big Beat boss, insisted that if it was the Pink Fairies it would sell more. Larry relented on the understanding that the album would be called *Previously Unreleased* and the personnel wouldn't be listed. Reviewing for *Sounds,* Andy Hurt rumbled the true nature of its origins: "The absence of sleeve notes or any other information — dates of recording, line up etc — raise doubt about just how authentic this release is. Larry Wallis is upfront alright, but it sounds suspiciously as though these 'previously unreleased' recordings could very well be previously *non existent* compositions knocked together recently." Despite its mysterious provenance, Hurt gave the album a very favourable review, four and three quarter stars out of five. "Six songs of generally first class quality. . . . No mucking about, the oily bikers rev into top gear from the off and keep the throttle squeezed tight throughout."

Previously Unreleased featured the core of the Death Commandos of Love, minus Andy Colquhoun. Larry took care of all the guitar parts in the recording studio, whilst the rhythm section consisted of Sandy and George Butler. It was a mixture of new material and older songs originally earmarked for Larry's ill fated solo album for Stiff (including I Think It's Coming Back Again, with lyrics by Mick Farren, and a Larry Wallis composition, As Long As The Price Is Right, originally written for and released as a single by Dr Feelgood in 1979). Another song from the aborted Stiff album was re-recorded and released as a single in France at the beginning of 1985, Leather Forever. (Charles Shaar Murray once referred to Larry and Mick Farren as the Lewis Leather Brigade.) The review of the single in *Sounds* was complimentary: "The record might not be full of surprises, but . . . the man with the shades is still one of *the* scorching guitarists. And wipes the floor with all these Johnny come lately 'were so decadent dahling' wimps. Long live the Kings of Oblivion!"

In May 1985, the Deviants line up of the Dingwalls gig the previous year was resurrected, with Andy Colquhoun resuming his place on guitar in

the absence of Wayne Kramer. On this occasion the band played two sets, and Mick recalls: “Larry opened and everyone wore t-shirts. Then — as the Deviants — we wore jackets and ties. Our Mafia period.”

But if Larry enjoyed playing the occasional gig with Mick Farren as the Deviants, for years the idea of reforming the Pink Fairies was anathema to him. Sandy and Russell weren’t particularly taken with the notion either. After interviewing the ex-Pink Fairies for a *Kerrang!* retrospective in 1984, Derek Oliver said: “All three agree that there is no chance they’ll ever resurrect the band or play together as the Pink Fairies. The final split in 1977 was certainly the end.”

Until the end of 1986, that is, when Larry spent Christmas with his old friend, Lee Brilleaux, of Dr Feelgood.

part one

Kill ’Em and Eat ’Em

Encouraged by a conversation he had with Lee Brilleaux, Larry came round to the idea of getting the Pink Fairies together again. Contrary to what they might have told Derek Oliver in 1984, Sandy and Russell were surprisingly receptive to Larry’s proposal. Sandy had no other commitments and had been playing in Larry’s backing band anyway. Russell on the other hand was working for London Transport. He was persuaded too, but, true to his word about never wanting to play music again for a living, refused to give up his day job, and plans for the reunion were made around his schedule on the buses.

Despite the animosity that had built up between other members of the band over the years, Twink was also asked if he would like to participate. Twink is somewhat rueful about the 1987 reunion tour today, but accepted the invitation with optimism. “Larry phoned me and basically said he was trying to make eighty seven a good year for everyone,” Twink recalls. “I thought it was good idea at the time . . . but I really jumped in without seriously thinking about it, you know?”

Paul Rudolph had been residing in Canada for a number of years, where he was involved in running a bicycle shop near to his native Vancouver. Joining the Pink Fairies as part of an ongoing touring and recording band was out of the question. Russell says: “Paul was in Canada, logistically it didn’t make sense. It would have had to be a much bigger deal to allow that to happen. But it would have been great!” Nevertheless, Larry was keen as ever on augmenting his own guitar with a second guitarist. Given his long association with the Cosmic Family and various Deviants/Pink Fairies related collaborations, Andy Colquhoun was an obvious choice.

The Pink Fairies were going to be prepared this time. A degree of professionalism had been introduced when Larry joined the band, but preparation was largely unheard of in the early days of the Pink Fairies. Now the band concentrated on the planned live shows, rehearsing a mixture of classic Pink Fairies numbers and more recent compositions (from the *Previously Unreleased* album). They wrote some songs, too.

After thirteen years at Dingwalls, much of it spent at the helm, Boss Goodman made a career move that took him to the Town & Country Club in London’s Kentish Town. Boss was instrumental in staging the first of the Pink Fairies comeback gigs, topping the bill at Explosion!, an event held at the Town & Country on March 15, that reflected the flourishing psychedelic garage rock scene in vogue during the mid eighties. The line up included Crazyhead, Voodoo Child, Flying Tractor Band and Little Feather, whilst the Doctor, of Doctor and the Medics, was DJ for the evening. A nod to a past with which the Pink Fairies were more than familiar, the lighting show was provided by the Fungicidal Dreamboat Light Show and the gig flyer advertised “Headshops, Wholefood, Kool Aid Stalls.”

Crazyhead singer, Ian Anderson, recalls the occasion: “I remember we were really pleased to be on the bill. At the time there was this ’new psychedelia’ movement happening, which was a tag that we were happy with, because as well as the punk garage element to our sound and attitude, we were all fans of early psychedelic rock as well.”

The Pink Fairies couldn’t have chosen a better time to reform. Psychedelic revivalists Doctor and the Medics, who emerged out of a scene that largely centred upon the Alice in Wonderland club in Soho, scored a surprise number one hit in the UK in the spring of 1986 with a cover of

Norman Greenbaum's Spirit In The Sky. At the other end of the spectrum, Gaye Bykers On Acid and Crazyhead took 1960s garage band aesthetics and fused them with the anarchic attitude of seventies punk and metal energy, typified by the likes of Edgar Broughton Band and Pink Fairies seventeen years earlier. It was all an antidote to the dourness of the Smiths and the sometimes twee, often pretentious, artiness of the indie music scene, as exemplified by the worst examples of the C86 genre.

Against this diametric musicscape the Pink Fairies reunion emerged. If audiences were expecting the Fairies to have been frozen in a time capsule since the mid seventies, they were in for a surprise. Crazyhead's Anderson recalls his first meeting with the band at the Town & Country:

> *I remember arriving for the soundcheck well. We unloaded the gear at the front of the stage, as the Fairies were soundchecking. I was* a *little disappointed to see these rather respectable looking middle aged men instead of dark satanic hippy antichrists of the underground. Then I saw the drummer. He appeared from behind his drum kit like some reptilian throwback from* a *primeval rock'n'roll swamp jungle, resplendent in skin tight pink or lime green strides, and looking well fucked by rock. However, I was not disappointed by the gentlemanly attitude of the frontman, who apologised to us for their long soundcheck, saying 'It's been* a *while, so we're* a *little out of practice.'*

Larry, Sandy and Andy may have been playing in the same band right up until the time of the reunion, but Russell had not played live with Larry and Sandy since 1977. As for Twink, the last time he had played with any of them was in 1975. The audience that night was a cross section of "new age hippy, goth, biker, sixties meets eighties crowd," recalls Anderson. As for the evening itself, he recalls the Doctor's "bizarre verbal ramblings" and chemically inspired DJ set of garage and acid rock, plus the mediocrity of the other support bands — "dull hippies," except for Voodoo Child, and of course his own band. Says Anderson: "I remember we played well but felt the reaction was muted so we started gobbing off in our usual snotty, bratty way to get a reaction of any kind, as we did in those early days. Glasses and

missiles along with verbal abuse were thrown, but in our music and sulphate haze we really didn't give a shit."

The comeback show at the Town & Country Club was an overwhelming success. Although Crazyhead attracted their share of the audience, it was evident that the passage of time had not diminished interest in the Pink Fairies and the show was a sell out. Opening with Raceway (the accidental instrumental from *Kings of Oblivion)* and rounding off with Do It!, the revitalised Fairies were firing on all cylinders.

The set was heavily represented by newer Larry Wallis and Andy Colquhoun penned numbers and, of early Pink Fairies material, tracks from *Kings of Oblivion* naturally outweighed any others, Larry being the main songwriter. The Snake, Do It! and Walk Don't Run were the only sops to the earlier era of Paul Rudolph and Twink. The band also threw in a frantic cover of The Letter by the Box Tops. And Police Car would became a fixture and crowd favourite for the rest of the reunion.

Sound engineer for the comeback gig was an old friend of the Pink Fairies from the days of the underground, Barry Everitt. More recently Everitt had been employed at Dingwalls, where he was familiar with Larry's various bands, and the Deviants reunions. "Knowing the band as I did over the years, and the various guises of the band," says Everitt, "it was always a chaotic affair when they played, but for some reason the vibe and the interaction between them at that Town & Country show was absolutely phenomenal!" He continues: "For me, as an engineer, it was a really enjoyable night. . . . I loved the two drummers, loved the two guitarists working off each other. . . . In those days I was doing a lot of heavy rock, as well as indie stuff, but it gave me the chance to pan and sweep guitars back and forward . . . and I loved mixing that sort of big sweeping, panning sound. In the eighties it was quite unusual to hear as a live mix."

The Town & Country gig filled everyone with big ideas for the future. More gigs were lined up, and Everitt was asked if he would do the sound for them. "Then they found out I was tour managing," says Everitt, "so it was one of those things where I could double up and keep their costs down, and we decided we'd all go on the road together."

Everitt is of the opinion that the Town & Country Club was intended as a one off gig "to test the waters," but as far as Andy Colquhoun is concerned it was always going to be more than that. The next gig for the Pink Fairies was Dingwalls, just under a fortnight later. Twink says:

> *From that point on it went downhill, because we had the same kind of response from the audience at Dingwalls when we went on stage, and amplifiers weren't working, so we stood there for ten or fifteen minutes trying to sort amplifiers out, and then we had to leave the stage . . . The gig eventually went off well, but it took about half an hour for us to get up and rock. By that time the audience, which was bursting at the seams, must have been* a *bit disappointed. I know I was anyway!*

Technical hitches aside, the Fairies generated enough interest to be offered an album deal with Demon Records. With the prospect of a new album later that year, the band continued to gig throughout the spring and summer of 1987, and even employed the services of a manager called Adam Lippett to handle the burden of the increasing workload. As with Pink Fairies' managers before him, Lippett didn't fare particularly well in controlling the band's affairs. "He tried," Russell says somewhat testily, "but we're actually unmanageable."

Russell was the only member of the band to be in full time employment, at least in the conventional sense. All the others were still involved in the music business to varying degrees, and, as such, had less to lose than Russell. Russell managed to juggle his responsibilities with proficiency and commitment, however, and Andy Colquhoun says: "Russell arranged his holidays around things . . . he was pretty good. He was there all the time.! think there was only one gig that he didn't turn up for, and we had Twink so we got round it that way."

As a guest on WMFU Radio in 1989, Twink said: "We worked very hard in rehearsals in the couple of weeks running up to the [Town & Country] show, and we delivered the goods and it was great." Andy Colquhoun attributes this discipline to Larry Wallis: "I think he'd got it pretty organised when he was in the Fairies, because he'd been a record

producer for Stiff, and he was very much into all that three minute single style of doing things."

Musically, things probably weren't as anarchic as the early Pink Fairies, says Colquhoun: "Songs were very tightly arranged, with more of a middle eight instrumental, whereas before, the Fairies were very much a freewheeling improvisational band."

Taking in a number of provincial towns, the band played venues that were generally small to medium sized, with at least two big shows that summer. The first big show was an Outlaw Biker's rally called the Cotswold Drag and Custom Show. Held over the weekend of July 17-19 at Long Marston Raceway (now called Stratford Park, near Stratford on Avon), it is famous for being the venue for the Hell's Angels' annual Bulldog Bash bikers festival. As befitting a typical English summer, it rained on and off on the day the Pink Fairies played, making the tarmac drag strip where the bikers raced lethally slick. Andy recalls: "It was drizzling steadily as we went on stage. Moments before, we were told that a bike rider had just crashed and died on the race track." Whether one sees it as insensitive or a fitting tribute to a downed biker, the band launched into what had become their set opener on the reunion: Raceway.

The Pink Fairies' next major event was the Acid Daze festival, held in the somewhat grandiosely named "Super Tent" in Finsbury Park, north London, on August 23, 1987. Sandy was unable to play due to an arm injury, the result of a drunken altercation between Larry and Sandy after a gig in Southampton. Recalls Andy: "Larry had lost his new leather jacket and Sandy said something conciliatory, but stupid, at which point Larry thumped him."

Sandy's injury created a dilemma, the immediate solution for which, the band decided, was for Larry and Andy to take turns on bass (the promoter of one gig overheard the band discussing tactics in the dressing room and decided not to pay them). For Acid Daze, however, they replaced Sandy with Big George Webley, who had played in Larry's band, the Death Commandos of Love, in 1982, and was familiar with some of the set. (He would later write the theme to the long running BBC current affairs comedy show, *Have I Got News For You.)*

Headlined by Hawkwind, Acid Daze boasted a line up of bands that represented both the eighties psychedelic revival and the so called "grebo" scene. Slotted somewhere near the middle of the bill, as part of the old guard, was the Pink Fairies. The Damned, masquerading as their 1960s garage band alter egos, Naz Nomad and the Nightmares, came on just before Hawkwind. *NME* likened the event to a "sports day in hell," and was particularly disparaging about the whole thing: "Who goes out to see Hawkwind, the Pink Fairies, Pop Will Eat Itself, Gaye Bykers On Acid, Doctor and the Medics, and in the name of God, Ozric Tentacles? Is this the reappearance of a counterculture? No, it's a lot of dirty hippies in purple t-shirts with stupid scrawling make up round their eyes."

The bands didn't fare much better either. David Quantick predictably lambasted everyone with the exception of Naz Nomad, and wrote of the Pink Fairies: "Their acid related rock formed the soundtrack to the eternal *Oz* reading Ladbroke Grove summer of 1969. Now they've all got different jobs and hang around Dingwalls, drinking lager. Their set was a cacophony of pub rock dressed as psychedelia." He concluded his review of the Pink Fairies with the same statement he had applied to Ozric Tentacles: "They were crap and got massive applause."

The reviewer for *Sounds* had a point when he said of the event, "Only two weeks in a septic tank gets near it." Being a particularly hot summer day, the Portaloos were rancid by mid afternoon, and festival goers on the adjacent tennis court baked in the relentless sun without the benefit of shade. Those who squeezed into the Super Tent sweltered in a muggy humidity, acrid with sweat and marijuana smoke.

At least the crowd appreciated the Pink Fairies, even if *Sounds* did not: "The Pink Fairies' penchant for the rudimentary riff remains unquashed by the mere passage of time and naturally meets with general approval. Ideal for those who just about have it in them to shake their hair, here's another regrouping that should have been nipped in the bud."

The drunken dispute over Larry's leather jacket aside, a rift had opened between Twink and the rest of the band. Twink had become teetotal and drug free, and, according to Sandy, was a card carrying member of Narcotics Anonymous at the time of the reunion. Even if the rest of the band had eased off their narcotic consumption, alcohol was still figuring

pretty highly as a recreational pastime. Inevitably, in a band with a reputation for drinking and drugging, Twink was becoming increasingly isolated. Larry told Tony Rettman: “The coach rides to the gig were a riot. Twank [Larry’s preferred choice of name for Twink] would sit up front and try to get the manager to give him his own dressing room complete with a shower, etc.” Andy emphasises this isolation further: “He’d keep himself to himself, whereas the rest of the band were boozing and smoking and everything. He’d gone from being a lunatic, and also being totally unreliable. . . . Twink was very strange . . . straight.”

The band tended not to associate much with Twink, although Sandy did make an effort to interact with him and sometimes put him up at his flat after returning from gigs, as it was difficult for Twink to travel on to his home in Colchester. The ultimate alienating factor however, came down to the issue of money once again. This particular bone of contention can be traced back to the 1970s: whether Twink’s actions in selling the publishing rights to some of his own songs to Blue Mountain were indeed as selfless as he suggests, some are of the opinion that he was out for what he could get.

There is certainly no love lost between Larry Wallis and Twink, a situation not helped by Twink’s assertion that Larry Wallis was never really a Pink Fairy. Russell initially had doubts about Twink’s inclusion in the 1987 reunion, but he and the rest of the band decided to put their misgivings behind them. Larry now rues the day he didn’t heed Russell’s concerns.

Larry recounts the experience of the Pretty Things reunion album:

> *When we did* Kill ’Em and Eat ’Em *Twink was so mad . . . Twink said, AAs the boss of Twink Records I need you to put all of this in black and white.’ I said, ’Twink for fuck’s sake, man, do you want to make* a *record or not?’ ’Put it all in writing . . . ’ So, Demon Records — Jake Riviera — said, ’Look, let’s get this thing rolling.’ But Twink says, ’Could you please send formalised documentation to my offices?’ ’Look* a *geezer wants to stick us into* a *fucking recording studio and make* a *record.’ ’I need to know what the album will be called, my lawyers will need to be informed . . . ’*

With a sigh of exasperation, Larry continues: “We were sitting with the rest of the band, and I said to everybody, ’This arsehole’s going to have a meeting with himself to decide if we can do it!’”

Barry Everitt remembers: “At the beginning it was all very positive — everyone was up for it — but it was always the rest of the band and Twink when it came down to a problem. There were the costing whines when I was trying to cost up a show. It always seemed that Twink wanted more money, and it wasn’t the way it was meant to be.”

Twink had set up his own record label with a catalogue that included a number of Fairies related recordings he had done on his own, as well as new solo material. Twink understandably saw an opportunity to market products from his own label on the tour, and sometimes sat on the merchandise stand signing and selling his records to punters as they filed into the venue. Great for the fans maybe, but in the wider scheme of things Twink’s vested interest proved to be a source of resentment. “Basically he was just doing what he could to grab as much money away from everybody else as possible,” recalls Everitt, “and obviously it caused friction, not only with Larry, but with Russell as well.” As calculated as Twink appeared to be with regards to fiscal matters, Everitt is of the opinion that it was just as well Andy Colquhoun “had a fairly good business brain.”

It was in the late summer, against this backdrop of simmering discontent, that the band entered Picnic Studios in Kent to record the fourth official studio album by the Pink Fairies.

Deriving from a comment made by Boss Goodman’s at Weeley in 1971, when liquid LSD had induced nightmare visions of turning to cannibalism in order to survive the festival, *Kill ’Em and Eat ’Em* became the name for the both the reunion dates and the new album. Armed with a full complement of fully rehearsed material, the band didn’t waste studio time having to work out songs as they had in the past. During the usual periods of inactivity associated with recording sessions, Russell Hunter spent one afternoon as umpire for a cricket match at the ground next to the studio, and the entourage entertained themselves with improvised games of indoor golf. “We set up a putting area in the hallway by the side of the studio,” recalls Barry Everitt, “and it was very serious golf and it went on for a few days!”

The album nearly didn't see the light of day at all. Pete Macklin from Demon records turned up unexpectedly three or four days into the two week session. Andy recalls: "This was on the day we were trying to mix some tapes so he could have a take away cassette of what we'd achieved so far . . . of course we were playing golf and looning about, to the extent that I think he was thinking he had to pull the plug on it."

Macklin obviously reconsidered, the recording continued and the album was completed in time for its release in November. Followers of the band were familiar with several of the tracks on the new album, given that they had been played throughout the tour, such as Bad Attitude, and live favourite Taking LSD. Others had been stage tested with Larry's Love Pirates of Doom, such as White Girls On Amphetamine, Broken Statue, Seeing Double and Fool About You.

Andy Colquhoun explains how two of the newer compositions came about:

> *Mick Farren sent me the lyric for Waiting For The Ice Cream to Melt. I played my demo to Larry, and it was in. The producer was trying for* the *moody take for the track, so we seemed to play it several nights running, after we'd put down some of the other songs. Larry came up with the haunting riff that starts it on that recording. There's* a *cassette of the song's first performance at the Long Marston festival before Larry had the riff. Even so it fitted right in with the Fairies set.*

I Might Be Lying was another track Andy cowrote with Larry: "It came about after I was listening to Larry in a soundcheck playing what became the main riff for the song. He was playing it very slowly, Police Car tempo. I'd just been listening to Dylan's *Blonde on Blonde* again, and somewhere he ends the verse with 'but I might be lyin'.' OK, now I had a song title. I took the idea over to Larry's studio in Walworth Road and we bashed down a demo version prior to offering it to the band."

Of the album itself, Larry is of the opinion, "it was a case of too many cooks. We had a couple of songwriters, and four blokes who liked to sing,

so compromises had to be made. I feel that *[Kill 'Em and Eat 'Em]* had no 'trip.' It's a safe, nicely recorded record."

As far as Twink is concerned it wasn't one of his finest hours: "I can't really say there were any highlights . . . it just wasn't really very enjoyable, and in fact I think the recordings at the end were a bit jaded, and they were slightly speeded up to give it an edge. It's not really a highlight in my career."

Different from any of the Pink Fairies three studio albums before it, no track on *Kill 'Em and Eat 'Em* clocks in at more than five minutes. Larry had become the master of the carefully crafted three minute song, and despite his guitar expertise being in evidence, gone from the album are the extended guitar solos that characterised the Rudolph era Fairies, and even to some extent the *Kings of Oblivion* line up.

> *Kill 'Em* was warmly received by the music press. Penny Reel, reviewing for *Sounds,* wrote: "The din which accompanies this has a belying charm that steals upon the listener by degrees, that is when it is not pummelling one into submission. The songs are all short, sharp, fast and sweet and if anything the exuberance of it all is more youthful than ever. Or perhaps this is what a final fling is all about!"

John Hotten in *Kerrang!* awarded it three and a half stars out of five: "The Fairies sound alternately like REM on speed; the Ramones on downers and what the Doors might have sounded like if they'd not indulged at all, especially on Fool About You. . . . Waiting For The Ice Cream To Melt and Taking LSD are sick sixties siblings, while White Girls On Amphetamine plays the darling daughter to Tubes' classic White Punks On Dope." In conclusion: "The Fairies have stayed away long enough to fade out of fashion and almost slip back in again . . . I enjoyed it, but then again, my copy was free."

The *NME* was typically dismissive, with Jack Barron awarding it only four stars out of ten. In a review entitled "Dad's wild years," Barron considered the Fairies' relevance to the alternative rock scene in 1987:

Although the Pink Fairies never realised it at the time — because they were too comatose on patchouli oil and Kitty Kat — fifteen years *later there would be* a *spotty rash of bands who would be dubbed grebos and over whom they would have* a *profound effect . . . Gone are the riffs hard enough to bite down on as a splatter guitar doctor administers ECT. Instead there are songs stolen from the underpants of Gaye Bykers On Acid. Things like Taking LSD and White Girls On Amphetamine as played by your dad. There is but one moment of glory, Fear Of Love. A luscious AOR attack, the tune proves that if a couple of the Fairies had concentrated on imbibing female hormones instead of opium they could have gone on to be Fleetwood Mac instead of losers.*

In the autumn of 1987 the Pink Fairies embarked on a further series of dates to promote the LP Additional gigs were added as the tour progressed, and it culminated in a second Acid Daze event at Leeds Queen's Hall, which was again topped by Hawkwind. The line up included Robert Calvert and the Starfighters, Suicide and the Enid, while Doctor and the Medics, Spaceman 3 and Tubilah Dog represented the new psychedelic movement.

The promotional dates for the *Kill 'Em* album continued to attract a good audience despite the mixed or hostile reception they received in the press. John Quinn of *Sounds* was enthusiastic in his review of the Pink Fairies at Sheffield University, supported by Death Trash, even if "Larry now resembles a bank clerk who has accidentally wandered onto the stage and is wondering how to get off." Quinn decided: "There will always be a place for bands like the Pink Fairies, and as they keep doing exactly what they want to do, not caring what people think, they'll still have a place in the hearts of people who think the same way."

Comments like this were undoubtedly well intentioned, but certain members of the band did care, and the Pink Fairies didn't always live up to the expectations of the younger audience. One incident in particular is regarded by the Fairies as highlighting the widening gulf between the band and some of the people who came to see them. "It was a gig in East London. . . . Woolwich Theatre maybe," recalls Andy. "I think we were sound- checking and this guy came down and took a reckoning of the

band's sartorial presentation, looked at our boots and so on, and said, 'Not weird enough!' which did upset Larry." Says Sandy: "We were all in blue suede shoes with pointy tips, and we were all dressed up. . . . How weird do you want us to be? Killing babies on stage? . . . For some reason people expected us to be really weird."

The impetus that had driven the band throughout those first eight months was starting to diminish by December 1987. Part of the reason was undoubtedly the audience. In his review of a gig at the Clarendon in London, Edwin Pouncey of the *NME* raised a demographical question: "The Fairies are *not* going through the motions as regurgitated rock'n'rollers, they're playing their hearts out, but their enthusiasm fails to connect with anyone outside their rabid unofficial fan club."

Barry Everitt is of the opinion there was too much of a tendency on the autumn tour to concentrate on material from the album: "I think up until *[Kill 'Em and Eat 'Em]* came out they were doing really good business, and suddenly it was like the new album was out and they had to play loads of tracks off that, and that wasn't what the audiences wanted to hear." Says Andy: "The fans just wanna hear Do It! and The Snake, and we'd written all these other songs so we had to do that. So yeah, there's always that dilemma there." "Coupled with the usual Twink, Russell and Larry problems," reflects Everitt, "it sort of came to an end."

There had been mutterings about getting rid of Twink for a while, and by 1988 he and the band had parted company once again. Twink explained to Nick Saloman in 1989:

> *It started out* a *lot of laughs, but I realised I wasn't getting anywhere which is why I eventually left. I'd had an offer to do some work with Anglian TV, and since I had no dates booked with the band at that time I accepted; then when a date came in, I phoned the agent who offered to move the date by a couple of weeks. Then when I called the band up and told them there had been* a *problem but I'd sorted it out, they said it was still* a *problem since why should they change the date just for me? So I offered to talk about subsequent dates, but they just hung up on me. Basically, I'd made* a *commitment to the band and I was willing to see it*

through to the end, even against my better judgement, but I must say I was glad when the phone went down on me.

Pink Fairies, minus Twink by this time, performing at the Sir George Robey, Finsbury Park, London, July 1988 (Photograph by and with permission of Neil Pett
The Sir George R

part two

"Rallying at Nuremburg"

The band was not at all hesitant about continuing without Twink. By January 1988, the Pink Fairies were back in action as a four piece, and they continued to gig sporadically as such throughout the year, albeit not to the same extent nor with the same profile as they had the previous year. But if the departure of Twink was not mourned, the same could not be said of the departure of Barry Everitt. Everitt had become a kind of Boss Goodman to the band. But Everitt made his living as a hired touring engineer, and because many of the Fairies reunion gigs were arranged on an ad hoc basis there was no guarantee of regular work. He had been offered more consistent employment, and recalls that "from 1988 onwards I was flat out, and I was taking three or four month tours at a shot, and obviously I couldn't do them [Pink Fairies] as well. I wasn't going to sit around waiting for one offs to come up."

Most of the gigs through 1988 were in London, indicative of a general scaling down of operations for the band. Of these London shows, Dingwalls is noteworthy in that Mick Farren put in one of his sporadic appearances. Rather than revert to the Deviants name, as sometimes had been the case, they played as the Pink Fairies. "I think it was a *Human Garbage* style set," says Mick, "plus a blinding version of Rocky Erikson's I Walked With A Zombie that segued into Memphis Psychosis and an arrangement of Leader Hotel that Andy worked out." The show was to have been recorded, but, says Mick, "some fucker managed to not record the tape. It was a really great show and I was very angry."

The band landed the most extensive foreign tour they had undertaken in any of their guises, courtesy of Motorhead manager Doug Smith, his firm EDW Entertainments, and German tour promoters Promanboo. Taking in ten dates that straddled the end of September and the beginning of October 1988, the Pink Fairies started their tour in Bochum in Germany on September 21. The next day they travelled to Arnheim in Holland before crossing back over the border to play in Hamburg. The remaining dates included Berlin, Cologne and Stuttgart, before closing in Nuremburg on October 3. Larry and Sandy travelled in the tour van with the equipment, while Russell and Andy shared a car.

The Pink Fairies were used to intensive gigging, but the German tour proved to be particularly gruelling, due in no small part to the relatively long distances between some venues. There was not much fun in the autobahn and consequently the tour was dubbed "Nothing But Sleep 'til Hammersmith," a pun on the title of Motorhead's number one album from 1981. One way of alleviating boredom was to play with the shortwave radios that enabled the two vehicles to keep in contact. Breakfast on the road consisted of Bloody Marys, lunch was apple schnapps, and on their day off the band visited the Munich Beer Festival.

Sandy recalls being able to buy alcoholic drinks at autobahn service stations, a particular favourite being a concoction called Die Apfel Korn, a spirit based liqueur flavoured with apples that came in miniature bottles. A bit of ingenious adaptation by the driver Tomas involved breaking the bottom off the empty Apfel Korn bottle, and using it as chillum for smoking

dope. Sandy remembers “smoking up a storm” during the long hours on the autobahn.

Larry had a far more effective way of passing the time between gigs: he would crash out at the back of the van with a secret supply of sleeping pills. Sandy meanwhile sat up front with driver Tomas, daunted by the speed at which traffic shifted without the hindrance of a speed limit. Says Sandy: “I’m going ’How fast are these cars going?’ . . . and you’d see these fucking BMWs going at least 120 miles per hour, and I’m sitting next to the driver — totally wired — and Larry’s asleep in the back oblivious. . . . Kings of Oblivious! Ha ha ha, and I’m trying to be *compos mentis* . . .”

Sandy wondered whether it was all worth it. At the Blockshock in Berlin, he says it was a case of “play loud, who cares? They’re all out of it, they can’t even hear it, they’re so out of it, and that was it.” The Pink Fairies never enjoyed the same success in Germany as their underground contemporaries Edgar Broughton Band, despite a week long residency at the Zoom Club in Frankfurt and releasing I Saw Her Standing There as a single in 1972. Sandy is of the opinion the tour wasn’t particularly well received: “They didn’t know where we were coming from. We did a gig on the German-Swiss border and the food was good, but the audience was shit!” He continues: “It was at gigs like that you wished you had Boss Goodman still on board.” Or even Barry Everitt for that matter. “We were kind of on our own and that’s why it didn’t work that well . . . it was just horrendous.” Nuremburg was a fitting end to the tour, or as Sandy now puts it: “We rallied at Nuremburg.”

Back in Britain, come the autumn, Larry was spending little time with the Pink Fairies. Andy Colquhoun explains:

> *Larry had gone off to France where he had* a *’Larry Wallis’ tour going on. He was hooked up with the Canvey Island crew organised by Dean Kennedy and his brother, who had been helping the Fairies on the road. Larry was quite pissed off with the Pink Fairies, as assembled at the time, and had informed us all that there would be no new material in the band’s set from now on. He might be there for a fossilised version of the Fairies, should an*

opportunity arise, or he might not. Informed speculation leaned towards the 'might not' motif.

Russell confirms: "Certainly Larry was in a very bad way booze-wise. For the rest of us it was pretty much business as usual — the end of all that though, really.

When Larry was unavailable for a gig at the Sir George Robey, Russell, Sandy and Andy went ahead and did it anyway. Encouraged by the response they received, and with Larry distancing himself from the band, the three of them decided to go it alone as the Pink Fairies.

In January 1989 the *Independent* newspaper reported how ex-members of bands Yes and the Byrds were in dispute over rights pertaining to the use of their name. Furthermore, "an equally fierce battle is reported to be raging among ex-members of the British psychedelic institution the Pink Fairies. After recent rumours that bass player Duncan 'Sandy' Sanderson was to re-form the group — as the Pink Fairies — came news that guitarist Larry Wallis was to form his own rival group; 'also', a reliable source told me, 'wishing to call themselves the Pink Fairies.'"

The *Independent* went on to explain how another ex-member, Twink, was also on the verge of forming another band with the Pink Fairies *"nom de guerre,"* and speculated that Paul Rudolph may resurrect the group too. Twink didn't actually start a Pink Fairies band and nothing came of the Paul Rudolph rumour either. Sandy, Russell and Andy however, changed their name to Flying Colours. "I think we just wanted to try it on a different level," says Sandy, who regards the split with Larry as nothing less than amicable, and the newspaper yarn about the struggle over the Pink Fairies name simply a case of "journalistic licence." Sandy continues: "Nobody owns the name, but anybody could lay claim to it, and fight it out in the High Court, but is it worth it? Noooo. I think not!"

Flying Colours debuted at the Tunnel Club in Greenwich, and a month later, both Larry and Flying Colours appeared at a benefit gig for the widow of the late Bob Calvert at Brixton Academy. In a line up that once again included Hawkwind, Doctor and the Medics, and Gaye Bykers On Acid, Larry's band and Flying Colours were billed under the umbrella name of the Pink Fairies Psychedelic Rock Revue.

The Brixton Academy gig arguably signified the beginning of a new era — albeit a brief one. Andy retraced the venue circuit the Pink Fairies had recently played and booked Flying Colours to play at a dozen or so of them. They had gigs in the London area, at the Tunnel Club, Deptford Crypt, and the Upper Cut Club in Forest Gate (an all-day event featuring Daevid Allen, Groundhogs, Omnia Opera and Here & Now), and also ventured into the provinces to play Cheltenham.

Flying Colours had enough material for an album but nothing made it beyond the demo stage, except for a couple of songs that appeared on *UHCK* Pink Fairies fanzine compilations, amongst them Runnin' Outa Road — a great Pink Fairies song if ever there was one! Sandy credits Andy Colquhoun as the driving force behind Flying Colours: "Andy always had that attempt at professionalism, that he could put it together, and he did a lot of work . . . he drove the truck, and this that and the other . . . there was no management, and no agency as such. I think it was just Andy pushing it."

Sandy is the first to admit that Flying Colours were "coasting on reputation, such as it was." People came to gigs expecting the Pink Fairies. At least one Flying Colours gig was advertised with an emphasis placed on "exPink Fairies." Says Sandy: "You kind of knew [Pink Fairies] would be printed on the posters anyway . . . and that's obviously how a promoter would do it . . . but there were some ex-Pink Fairies in amongst it, in fact all three of us were, so there you go!" Sandy concludes: "I wouldn't say it was a great band — we probably needed a keyboard player to fill the sound out or something — but we proved we could do it, put it that way."

By the end of the summer Flying Colours had called it a day. Andy Colquhoun echoes Sandy's sentiments: "We had a point to prove, and we proved it. Maybe we could have persisted, but we were managing ourselves, and you know musicians aren't really cut out for that. Russell and Sandy were a fabulous improvisational team, but in a sense Runnin' Outa Road says it all."

Twink and Paul Rudolph in Rudolph's Fraser Sound Studio recording Pleasure Island in Vancouver, 1996 (Photograph courtesy of Tim Rundall)

part three

Fragments of Broken Probes

If the German tour in the autumn had proven the final hurrah for the Pink Fairies, then the demise of Flying Colours was a last gasp for what remained of a line up begun some eighteen months earlier. The reunion had continued far longer than many people dared imagine, and stands today as the last significant activity of various members of the Pink Fairies. That said, Paul Rudolph and Twink collaborated on two albums in 1996 and 1997, using the Pink Fairies moniker, *Pleasure Island* and *No Picture.* The former received a favourable review in the *Times:*

> *Recorded in Rudolph's native Canada,* Pleasure Island *returns to children's fairy tales this time it's Pinocchio for its title, but, instead of the acid rock of yesteryear, Rudolph's trademark overamplified guitar and Twink's frenetic drumming are tripping on rum on Cargoe To Jamaica, an epic thirty minute psychedelic jam, while the sound of Dick Dale meets John Barry on The Man With The Golden Gun, and We Run, We Hide is* a *witty Beach Boys pastiche. Tasty licks, indeed.*

It wasn't very often that Paul Rudolph stuck his head above the parapets, especially not with another original Pink Fairy. Whether it was entirely appropriate to have used the Pink Fairies moniker for these projects is up for debate. Soon after his return to Canada at the end of the 1970s Paul Rudolph became involved with a Vancouver band called Melodic Energy Commission, but by the early eighties he was disillusioned with the music business and the direction it was taking. The collaborations with Twink bear testimony to this, and both of the albums were recorded in his home studio, Fraser Sound. Having beaten cancer, with which he was diagnosed in 1999, Paul's consuming passion remains bicycles, but he does still keep his hand in with the guitar and bass, and combines music and bicycling to raise funds for his local community benefits. It may be a long way from the gigs under the Westway in Portobello Road, but the sentiment is there, and Rudolph's spirit of the sixties and seventies remains.

Since the collaboration with Paul Rudolph in 1997, Twink has kept a fairly low profile with regard to new musical projects. However, his schedule following his immediate departure from the Pink Fairies in 1988 was quite a busy one: Twink became involved with American psychedelic rockers Plasticland. After some live dates in the States, Twink and Plasticland recorded a live album at the Lounge Axe in Chicago called *You Need A Fairy Godmother,* whereupon Twink returned to the UK and played with seventies band Magic Muscle. He also collaborated with the Bevis Frond, essentially an alter ego for guitarist Nick Salomon. Twink continued to run his own record label, and released a solo album called *Mr Rainbow* in 1990, which largely consisted of reworked songs from his involvement with bands such as Tomorrow, Pretty Things and Pink Fairies, and a smattering of new material. Twink also hooked up with Hawkwind's Nik Turner on a number of occasions, and at least one of these collaborations was recorded and released on Twink Records as Pinkwind. Appropriation of the Pink Fairies name in this way continues to be a bone of contention with the other Fairies, especially Twink's alleged involvement with the release of old Pink Fairies material without the consultation of other members.

Larry Wallis was moved to suggest on his website in 2003 that Twink marketed Pink Fairies products "under false pretences" at the expense of the other band members. Even the usually reticent Paul Rudolph has been

moved to say: “Twink — and Dave Brock’s — downfall is that they all wanted to try and have all the publishing, like some kind of retirement fund, and of course a certain kind of animosity gets stirred up in there, and it never really gets worked out.”

It would appear that other parties share the same disdain for John “Twink” Alder as Larry, but they refuse to be drawn into discussing the matter in detail. “I for one am not going to get involved in a public slanging match of the ’OH YES you did, OH NO I didn’t’ variety with him,” says Russell. “From my perspective, based on far too much personal experience, he’s a thoroughly dishonest, double dealing shyster.”

Regardless of the ill feeling, Twink’s relevance to the Pink Fairies legend cannot be denied. Sadly, with the way things are between Twink, Larry Wallis and Russell Hunter, any kind of reconciliation is about as likely as a gig on Uranus. Today Twink talks about a band project he is involved with in Los Angeles called Moonchild, although it is currently on the backburner whilst he alternates his time between the UK and Morocco, a country and culture for which he still has a passion.

Mick Farren and Andy Colquhoun have arguably been the most prolific of the Deviants/Pink Fairies axis since the Fairies last performed in 1988. Mick continues to write, fiction and non fiction, and has recorded plenty of material under a variety of guises, such as Lunar Malice, Tijuana Bible, and Death Tongue with Wayne Kramer (he contributed lyrics to some of the material on Kramer’s solo albums in the 1990s). The most consistent band name for Mick remains the Deviants, whose recent incarnations are responsible for the albums *Eating Jello With A Heated Fork,* the highly estimable *Dr Crow,* and *The Deviants: Live In Japan 1999.* On all of these Mick is accompanied by Andy Colquhoun.

Andy Colquhoun had a solo album called *Pick Up The Phone America*, which was released by the Japanese label Captain Trips in 2003 (which included a reworked version of the Flying Colours anthem Runnin’ Outa Road). Captain Trips also released *Chinese Cowboys* in autumn 2005, a live Pink Fairies album culled from performances at Long Marston and Leeds from the 1987 reunion tour.

Mick Farren is particularly popular in Japan, and has visited the country on a number of occasions since the Deviants concert in 1999. *To The Masterlock: Live in Japan 2004* features Mick backed by Japanese musicians from Ken Matsutani's band Marble Sheep, and a guitarist called Nabeji from Slunky Side. (Matsutani owns the Captain Trips record label.)

Larry Wallis formed a band called the Redbirds with Phil Mitchell from Dr Feelgood and Chris North, ex-the Enid. They played a number of dates on the continent and released a twelve inch single, Truth, Justice And A Wholesome Packed Lunch. They split up in the early nineties and Larry hit the booze pretty heavily. Larry told Tony Rettman in 2002:

> *Drink has played* a very *large part in my life, but I didn't realise where it was taking me until I got there, and by then it was too late. There's nothing worse than* a guy *who hates himself because he's* a *drunk with a fairly cool line of royalty cheques dropping onto his doormat at regular intervals. For* a *while I became* a *hermit. I didn't go anywhere because it interfered with my drinking. Folks who weren't aware of my new career move would call with all kinds of offers. I'd agree then let them down because drinking makes even the most mundane tasks really hard.*

In March 1997, Larry was diagnosed as having polyneuropathy when he collapsed in his kitchen after "boozing for about a week in fifth gear," as he put it to Tony Rettman. Larry quit alcohol when he was told that even a pint of beer a week could put him in a wheelchair in three years, and he could be dead in five. After years on the wagon, he released his first solo album proper in 2002: *Death In The Guitarfternoon.* Fifty five minutes of blistering wah-wah drenched guitarwork shows that Lazza hadn't lost his touch. Two of the songs are cowritten with Mick Farren, and the album is rounded off with Screw It!, a variation on the Pink Fairies' Do it! and a thinly veiled dig at a certain ex-Pink Fairy band mate. Despite the album being a real return to form for Larry, gigs to promote it were not so forthcoming, and live performances in recent years have been limited to one off events, such as memorial shows for Dr Feelgood frontman Lee Brilleaux, and underground press photographer Keith Morris in the autumn of 2005. All a far cry from most of the 1980s, when barely a fortnight

would pass at Dingwalls without an appearance from Larry Wallis and one of his bands.

Overseeing many of the Deviants and Pink Fairies' finest hours as their head roadie, Boss Goodman ran the show at Dingwalls for almost fifteen years, before a career change took him to the Town & Country Club and ultimately the job of head chef at the Portobello Gold on Portobello Road, in the 1990s. (US President Bill Clinton dropped by on one occasion and sampled Boss's culinary delights.) Formerly the Princess Alexandra, this was once a favourite haunt of the Pink Fairies and Motorhead in the 1970s. Boss continued to DJ at the 100 Club on Oxford Street up until he suffered a severe stroke in March 2006.

The least musically active have been Russell and Sandy — ironic given that they were the backbone of both the Deviants and Pink Fairies since the 1960s. After the last Pink Fairies reunion, Sandy turned his attention to photography and swapped his bass for a camera. In recent years Sandy has rarely picked up his bass, let alone recorded anything. Russell continues to work for London Transport, although he has experimented with musical computer technology and contributed some of his efforts to *UHCK's* series of Deviants and Fairies related releases. No matter how many variations of band members and associates have passed themselves off as the Pink Fairies over the years, there is arguably no bona fide Pink Fairies line up without the two constants of Russell and Sandy.

Since the Pink Fairies last reformed in the 1980s there have been plenty of rumours about fresh reunions and even several aborted attempts at reforming, but all have amounted to nothing. They may not have played live together for nearly twenty years, but the influence of the Deviants and Pink Fairies resonates and continues to be felt. They have provided inspiration for the likes of John Lydon, Mick Jones of the Clash, Shane McGowan of the Pogues, Captain Sensible and Brian James of the Damned, and ex-Black Flag Henry Rollins, to name but a few. Their inimitable brand of cosmic boogie, street politics and hard hitting anarchic rock'n'roll has ensured them cult status and, from deviation street to kings of oblivion, that is a status they fully deserve.

epilogue . . .

No Fairy Tale Ending

Out of the blue, it was announced in the autumn of 2006 that the *Kings of Oblivion* era Pink Fairies were to reunite for one last farewell at their spiritual home, the Roundhouse, London, in January 2007. Things got off to an inauspicious start when the band failed to turn up for a Radio 6 session in mid December. Fears were allayed somewhat when Mick Farren revealed that he was going to fly in to the UK to join the Pink Fairies as their special guest at the Roundhouse. Just when it looked like it really was going to happen circumstances conspired against them. With less than two weeks to go it was announced that Larry Wallis had sustained a painful back injury, and at such short notice there was no option but to postpone the gig.

Magic Alex, on the Pink Fairies Yahoo messagegroup, sums it up when he writes: "Is there any other band in history that's done so much to sabotage their own career? Is there any other band in history that's shot their career in the foot so regularly? Even their peers (Hawkwind, the Broughtons etc) were able to get themselves together when it mattered . . . Usually. I guess it's part of the Pink Fairies' charm and another reason to love 'em. They're still bastards, though."

Pigs might fly again, but don't hold your breath!

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Left: Paul Rudolph and team at his bicycle shop, Spincycles, in Gibsons Landing, Vancouver, BC, Canada, 2006 (Photograph by Amy Walker)
Right: The author and Sandy, London, January 5, 2006

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